All Star Anniversary Issue

THE MAGAZINE OF Fantasy AND Science Fiction

OCTOBER 35¢

EVERY STORY in this issue NEW

ALFRED BESTER

ARTHUR C. CLARKE

CHARLES G. FINNEY

ROBERT A. HEINLEIN

GERALD KERSH

DAMON KNIGHT

WILBUR DANIEL STEELE

WILLIAM TENN

"... The Magazine of FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION consistently publishes more stories of high quality than any other science fiction magazine in the world."
Villiers Gerson, NEW YORK TIMES Book Review

LICENSED TO UNTOLD
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE MAGAZINE OF

Fantasy and Science Fiction

VOLUME 15, No. 4 OCTOBER

Every Story in This Issue NEW

Eastward Ho!	WILLIAM TENN	5
Of Mind and Matter *(article)*	ARTHUR C. CLARKE	20
The Black Retriever	CHARLES G. FINNEY	27
The Terribly Wild Flowers	GERALD KERSH	36
Unfortunately	FREDRIC BROWN	49
Recommended Reading *(books)*	ANTHONY BOUCHER	50
Ballade of an Artificial Satellite	POUL ANDERSON	55
Have Space Suit—Will Travel *(Conclusion)*	ROBERT A. HEINLEIN	56
The Bogey Man	WILBUR DANIEL STEELE	99
The Night of Lies	DAMON KNIGHT	114
The Men Who Murdered Mohammed	ALFRED BESTER	118

"Coming Next Month" appears on page 129

Cover by Emsh

Joseph W. Ferman, PUBLISHER *Robert P. Mills*, EDITOR

The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, Volume 15, No. 4, Whole No. 89, OCT. 1958. Published monthly by Mercury Press, Inc., at 35¢ a copy. Annual subscription, $4.00 in U. S. and Possessions, Canada and the Pan-American Union; $5.00 in all other countries. Publication office, Concord, N. H. Editorial and general offices, 527 Madison Avenue, New York 22, N. Y. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at Concord, N. H. under the Act of March 3, 1879. Printed in U. S. A. *© 1958 by Mercury Press, Inc. All rights, including translation into other languages, reserved. Submissions must be accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes; the Publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts.*

William Tenn, CONSULTING EDITOR *Anthony Boucher*, BOOK EDITOR
J. Francis McComas, ADVISORY EDITOR *George Salter*, ART EDITOR

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

About this issue...

This is an anniversary issue. Nine years ago, J. Francis McComas and Anthony Boucher put together the first issue of The Magazine of FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION (and a memorable issue it was, too—do you recall for example, Philip MacDonald's *Private—Keep Out,* or Theodore Sturgeon's *The Hurkle Is a Happy Beast*?). We think a goodly amount of fine reading has flowed under the masthead since then; and other people seem to think so, too. People such as Orville Prescott of the New York *Times,* and Basil Davenport and Cifton Fadiman of the Book-of-the-Month Club have said kind things about us; science fiction and fantasy anthologists have picked an astonishing percentage of our stories; unique among science-fantasy publications, we have been tapped by editors of Best-of-the-Year short story collections, and a notable number of books have been assembled exclusively from material that first appeared in these pages. Messrs. McComas and Boucher—with Mr. Boucher handling things alone in recent years—have made, we think, a vital contribution to the field.

With this kind of magazine and this kind of anniversary, we felt something special was in order. To that end we chivvied Alfred Bester into writing his first short story in much too long a time . . . badgered Gerald Kersh . . . chased Arthur C. Clarke . . . asked Wilbur Daniel Steele. . . . Altogether, we were most energetic about the whole thing—almost too energetic; we wound up with more stories than would fit, and in particular regret having to omit a first-rate short novelet by Poul Anderson. (It is called *Wildcat,* and will be featured in next month's issue; for further details, see page 129.) We think it all adds up to a rather special issue, and hope you find it pleasurable. We'd be glad to know what you think of it—any communications on this issue (or others, past or future) will be most gratefully received.

If, incidentally, you have found entertainment, relaxation, stimulation, or other forms of pleasure in these pages, why not subscribe?

Fantasy & Science Fiction MF-Oct.-8
527 Madison Ave., New York 22, N. Y.

Please enter my subscription to 12 issues of FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION ($4.00)

Name.....

Address.....

City.....*Zone*.....*State*.....

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*Our April 1954 issue led off with a delightful, satirical fantasy—*The Tenants, *by William Tenn. And that, for a clutch of complicated reasons, is the only contribution we were able to secure from Mr. Tenn prior to this one. How much we wanted another is evident in the lengths we went to get him: First, we persuaded him to become F&SF's Consulting Editor, and next we organized an All-Star Issue as special bait. What we have as a result of all this is a piece which is both science fiction and parable—parable of Time Past, and of Time (conceivably) to Come. Mr. Tenn's antic humor glints here, but there is also something else . . . something that bites.*

Eastward Ho!

by WILLIAM TENN

THE NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE HAD been hard on the horses. South of New Brunswick the potholes had been so deep, the scattered boulders so plentiful, that the two men had been forced to move at a slow trot, to avoid crippling their three precious animals. And, of course, this far south, farms were non-existent: they had been able to eat nothing but the dried provisions in the saddle-bags, and last night they had slept in a roadside service station, suspending their hammocks between the tilted, rusty gas pumps.

But it was still the best, the most direct route, Jerry Franklin knew. The Turnpike was a government road: its rubble was cleared semi-annually. They had made excellent time and come through without even developing a limp in the pack-horse. As they swung out on the last lap, past the riven tree-stump with the words TRENTON EXIT carved on its side, Jerry relaxed a bit. His father, his father's colleagues, would be proud of him. And he was proud of himself.

But the next moment, he was alert again. He roweled his horse, moved up alongside his companion, a young man of his own age.

"Protocol," he reminded. "I'm the leader here. You know better

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

than to ride ahead of me this close to Trenton."

He hated to pull rank. But facts were facts, and if a subordinate got above himself he was asking to be set down. After all, he was the son—and the oldest son, at that—of the Senator from Idaho; Sam Rutherford's father was a mere Undersecretary of State and Sam's mother's family was pure postoffice clerk all the way back.

Sam nodded apologetically and reined his horse back the proper couple of feet. "Thought I saw something odd," he explained. "Looked like an advance party on the side of the road—and I could have sworn they were wearing buffalo robes."

"Seminole don't wear buffalo ropes, Sammy. Don't you remember your sophomore political science?"

"I never had any political science, Mr. Franklin: I was an engineering major. Digging around in ruins has always been my dish. But, from the little I know, I didn't *think* buffalo robes went with the Seminole. That's why I was—"

"Concentrate on the packhorse," Jerry advised. "Negotiations are my job."

As he said this, he was unable to refrain from touching the pouch upon his breast with rippling fingertips. Inside it was his commission, carefully typed on one of the last precious sheets of official government stationery (and it was not one whit less official because the reverse side had been used years ago as a scribbled inter-office memo), and signed by the President himself. In ink!

The existence of such documents was important to a man in later life. He would have to hand it over, in all probability, during the conferences, but the commission to which it attested would be on file in the capitol up north. And, when his father died, and he took over one of the two hallowed Idaho seats, it would give him enough stature to make an attempt at membership on the Appropriations Committee. Or, for that matter, why not go the whole hog—the Rules Committee itself? No Senator Franklin had ever been a member of the Rules Committee. . . .

The two envoys knew they were on the outskirts of Trenton when they passed the first gangs of Jerseyites working to clear the road. Frightened faces glanced at them briefly, and quickly bent again to work. The gangs were working without any visible supervision. Evidently the Seminole felt that simple instructions were sufficient.

But as they rode into the blocks of neat ruins that was the city proper and still came across nobody more important than white men, another explanation began

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to occur to Jerry Franklin. This all had the look of a town still at war, but where were the combatants? Almost certainly on the other side of Trenton, defending the Delaware River—that was the direction from which the new rulers of Trenton might fear attack—not from the north where there was only the United States of America.

But if that were so, who in the world could they be defending against? Across the Delaware to the south there was nothing but more Seminole. Was it possible—was it possible that the Seminole had at last fallen to fighting among themselves?

Or was it possible that Sam Rutherford had been right? Fantastic. Buffalo robes in Trenton! There should be no buffalo robes closer than a hundred miles westward, in Harrisburg.

But when they turned onto State Street, Jerry bit his lip in chagrin. Sam had seen correctly, which made him one up.

Scattered over the wide lawn of the gutted state capitol were dozens of wigwams. And the tall, dark men who sat impassively, or strode proudly among the wigwams, all wore buffalo robes. There was no need even to associate the paint on their faces with a remembered lecture in political science: these were Sioux.

So the information that had come drifting up to the government about the identity of the invader was totally inaccurate—as usual. Well, you couldn't expect communication miracles over this long a distance. But that inaccuracy made things difficult. It might invalidate his commission for one thing: his commission was addressed directly to Osceola VII, Ruler of All the Seminoles. And if Sam Rutherford thought this gave him a right to preen himself—

He looked back dangerously. No, Sam would give no trouble. Sam knew better than to dare an I-told-you-so. At his leader's look, the son of the Undersecretary of State dropped his eyes groundwards to immediate humility.

Satisfied, Jerry searched his memory for relevant data on recent political relationships with the Sioux. He couldn't recall much—just the provisions of the last two or three treaties. It would have to do.

He drew up before an important-looking warrior and carefully dismounted. You might get away with talking to a Seminole while mounted, but not the Sioux. The Sioux were very tender on matters of protocol with white men.

"We come in peace," he said to the warrior standing as impassively straight as the spear he held, as stiff and hard as the rifle on his back. "We come with a message of importance and many gifts to your chief. We come from

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New York, the home of our chief." He thought a moment, then added: "You know, The Great White Father?"

Immediately, he was sorry for the addition. The warrior chuckled briefly; his eyes lit up with a lightning-stroke of mirth. Then his face was expressionless again, and serenely dignified as befitted a man who had counted coup many times.

"Yes," he said. "I have heard of him. Who has not heard of the wealth and power and far dominions of The Great White Father? Come. I will take you to our chief. Walk behind me, white man."

Jerry motioned Sam Rutherford to wait.

At the entrance to a large, expensively decorated tent, the Indian stood aside and casually indicated that Jerry should enter.

It was dim inside, but the illumination was rich enough to take Jerry's breath away. Oil lamps! Three of them! These people lived well.

A century ago, before the whole world had gone smash in the last big war, his people had owned plenty of oil lamps themselves. Better than oil lamps, perhaps, if one could believe the stories the engineers told around the evening fires. Such stories were pleasant to hear, but they were glories of the distant past. Like the stories of overflowing granaries and chock-full supermarkets, they made you proud of the history of your people, but they did nothing for you now. They made your mouth water, but they didn't feed you.

The Indians whose tribal organization had been the first to adjust to the new conditions, in the all-important present, the Indians had the granaries, the Indians had the oil lamps. And the Indians . . .

There were two nervous white men serving food to the group squatting on the floor. An old man, the chief, with a carved, chunky body. Three warriors, one of them surprisingly young for council. And a middle-aged Negro, wearing the same bound-on rags as Franklin, except that they looked a little newer, a little cleaner.

Jerry bowed low before the chief, spreading his arms apart, palms down.

"I come from New York, from our chief," he mumbled. In spite of himself, he was more than a little frightened. He wished he knew their names so that he could relate them to specific events. Although he knew what their names would be like—approximately. The Sioux, the Seminole, all the Indian tribes renaissant in power and numbers, all bore names garlanded with anachronism. That queer mixture of several levels of the past, overlaid

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

always with the cocky, expanding present. Like the rifles *and* the spears, one for the reality of fighting, the other for the symbol that was more important than the reality. Like the use of wigwams on campaign, when, according to the rumors that drifted smokily across country, their slave artisans could now build the meanest Indian noble a damp-free, draft-proof dwelling such as the President of the United States, lying on his special straw pallet, did not dream about. Like paint-spattered faces peering through newly re-invented, crude microscopes. What had microscopes been like? Jerry tried to remember the Engineering Survey Course he'd taken in his freshman year—and drew a blank. All the same, the Indians were so queer, *and* so awesome. Sometimes you thought that destiny had meant them to be conquerors, with a conqueror's careless inconsistency. Sometimes . . .

He noticed that they were waiting for him to continue. "From our chief," he repeated hurriedly. "I come with a message of importance and many gifts."

"Eat with us," the old man said. "Then you will give us your gifts and your message."

Gratefully, Jerry squatted on the ground a short distance from them. He was hungry, and among the fruit in the bowls he had seen something that must be an orange. He had heard so many arguments about what oranges tasted like!

After a while, the old man said, "I am Chief Three Hydrogen Bombs. This—" pointing to the young man— "is my son, Makes Much Radiation. And this—" pointing to the middle-aged Negro —"is a sort of compatriot of yours."

At Jerry's questioning look, and the chief's raised finger of permission, the Negro explained. "Sylvester Thomas. Ambassador to the Sioux from the Confederate States of America."

"The Confederacy? She's still alive? We heard ten years ago—"

"The Confederacy is very much alive, sir. The Western Confederacy that is, with its capitol at Jackson, Mississippi. The Eastern Confederacy, the one centered at Richmond, Virginia, did go down under the Seminole. We have been more fortunate. The Arapahoe, the Cheyenne, and—" with a nod to the chief—"especially the Sioux, if I may say so, sir, have been very kind to us. They allow us to live in peace, so long as we till the soil quietly and pay our tithes."

"Then would you know, Mr. Thomas—" Jerry began eagerly. "That is . . . the Lone Star Republic—Texas— Is it possible that Texas, too . . . ?"

Mr. Thomas looked at the floor of the wigwam unhappily. "Alas, my good sir, The Republic of the Lone Star Flag fell before the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Kiowa and the Comanche long years ago when I was still a small boy. I don't remember the exact date, but I do know it was before even the last of California was annexed by the Apache and the Navajo, and well before the nation of the Mormons under the august leadership of—"

Makes Much Radiation shifted his shoulders back and forth and flexed his arm muscles. "All this talk," he growled. "Paleface talk. Makes me tired."

"Mr. Thomas is not a paleface," his father told him sharply. "Show respect! He's our guest and an accredited ambassador—you're not to use a word like paleface in his presence!"

One of the other, older warriors near the chief spoke up. "In the old days, in the days of the heroes, a boy of Makes Much Radiation's age would not dare raise his voice in council before his father. Certainly not to say the things he just has. I cite as reference, for those interested, Robert Lowie's definitive volume, *The Crow Indians*, and Lesser's fine piece of anthropological insight, *Three Types of Siouan Kinship*. Now, whereas we have not yet been able to reconstruct a Siouan kinship pattern on the classic model described by Lesser, we have developed a working arrangement that—"

"The trouble with you, Bright Book Jacket," the warrior on his left broke in, "is that you're too much of a classicist. You're always trying to live in the Golden Age instead of the present, and a Golden Age that really has little to do with the Sioux. Oh, I'll admit that we're as much Dakotan as the Crow, from the linguist's point of view at any rate, and that, superficially, what applies to the Crow should apply to us. But what happens when we quote Lowie in so many words and try to bring his precepts into daily life?"

"Enough," the chief announced. "Enough, Hangs A Tale. And you, too, Bright Book Jacket—enough, enough! These are private tribal matters. Though they do serve to remind us that the paleface was once great before he became sick and corrupt and frightened. These men whose holy books teach us the lost art of living like Sioux, men like Lesser, men like Robert H. Lowie, were not these men palefaces? And in memory of them should we not show tolerance?"

"A-ah!" said Makes Much Radiation impatiently. "As far as I'm concerned, the only good palefaces are dead. And that's that." He thought a bit. "Except their women. Paleface women are fun when you're a long way from home and feel like raising a little hell."

Chief Three Hydrogen Bombs glared his son into silence. Then

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he turned to Jerry Franklin. "Your message and your gifts. First your message."

"No, Chief," Bright Book Jacket told him respectfully but definitely. "First the gifts. *Then* the message. That's the way it was done."

"I'll have to get them. Be right back." Jerry walked out of the tent backwards and ran to where Sam Rutherford had tethered the horses. "The presents," he said urgently. "The presents for the chief."

The two of them tore at the pack straps. With his arms loaded, Jerry returned through the warriors who had assembled to watch their activity with quiet arrogance. He entered the tent, set the gifts on the ground and bowed low again.

"Bright beads for the chief," he said, handing over two star sapphires and a large white diamond, the best that the engineers had evacuated from the ruins of New York in the past ten years.

"Cloth for the chief," he said, handing over a bolt of linen and a bolt of wool, spun and loomed in New Hampshire especially for this occasion and painfully, expensively carted to New York.

"Pretty toys for the chief," he said, handing over a large, only slightly rusty alarm clock and a precious typewriter, both of them put in operating order by batteries of engineers and artisans working in tandem (the engineers interpreting the brittle old documents to the artisans) for two and a half months.

"Weapons for the chief," he said, handing over a beautifully decorated cavalry saber, the prized hereditary possession of the Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force, who had protested its requisitioning most bitterly ("Damn it all, Mr. President, do you expect me to fight these Indians with my bare hands?" — "No, I don't, Johnny, but I'm sure you can pick up one just as good from one of your eager junior officers").

Three Hydrogen Bombs examined the gifts, particularly the typewriter, with some interest. Then he solemnly distributed them among the members of his council, keeping only the typewriter and one of the sapphires for himself. The sword he gave to his son.

Makes Much Radiation tapped the steel with his fingernail. "Not so much," he stated. "Not-so-*much*. Mr. Thomas came up with better stuff than this from the Confederate States of America for my sister's puberty ceremony." He tossed the saber negligently to the ground. "But what can you expect from a bunch of lazy, good-for-nothing whiteskin stinkards?"

When he heard the last word, Jerry Franklin went rigid. That meant he'd have to fight Makes

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Much Radiation—and the prospect scared him right down to the wet hairs on his legs. The alternative was losing face completely among the Sioux.

"Stinkard" was a term from the Natchez system and was applied these days indiscriminately to all white men bound to field or factory under their aristocratic Indian overlords. A "stinkard" was something lower than a serf, whose one value was that his toil gave his masters the leisure to engage in the activities of full manhood: hunting, fighting, thinking.

If you let someone call you a stinkard and didn't kill him, why, then you *were* a stinkard—and that was all there was to it.

"I am an accredited representative of the United States of America," Jerry said slowly and distinctly, "and the oldest son of the Senator from Idaho. When my father dies, I will sit in the Senate in his place. I am a free-born man, high in the councils of my nation, and anyone who calls me a stinkard is a rotten, no-good, foul-mouthed liar!"

There—it was done. He waited as Makes Much Radiation rose to his feet. He noted with dismay the well-fed, well-muscled sleekness of the young warrior. He wouldn't have a chance against him. Not in hand-to-hand combat—which was the way it would be.

Makes Much Radiation picked up the sword and pointed it at Jerry Franklin. "I could chop you in half right now like a fat onion," he observed. "Or I could go into a ring with you knife to knife and cut your belly open. I've fought and killed Seminole, I've fought Apache, I've even fought and killed Comanche. But I've never dirtied my hands with paleface blood, and I don't intend to start now. I leave such simple butchery to the overseers of our estates. Father, I'll be outside until the lodge is clean again." Then he threw the sword ringingly at Jerry's feet and walked out.

Just before he left, he stopped, and remarked over his shoulder: "The oldest son of the Senator from Idaho! Idaho has been part of the estates of my mother's family for the past forty-five years! When will these romantic children stop playing games and start living in the world as is now?"

"My son," the old chief murmured. "Younger generation. A bit wild. Highly intolerant. But he means well. Really does. Means well."

He signaled to the white serfs who brought over a large chest covered with great splashes of color.

While the chief rummaged in the chest, Jerry Franklin relaxed inch by inch. It was almost too good to be true: he wouldn't have to fight Makes Much Radiation,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and he hadn't lost face. All things considered, the whole business had turned out very well indeed.

And as for that last comment—well, why expect an Indian to understand about things like tradition and the glory that could reside forever in a symbol? When his father stood up under the cracked roof of Madison Square Garden and roared across to the Vice President of the United States: "The people of the sovereign state of Idaho will never and can never in all conscience consent to a tax on potatoes. From time immemorial, potatoes have been associated with Idaho, potatoes have been the pride of Idaho. The people of Boise say *no* to a tax on potatoes, the people of Pocatello say *no* to a tax on potatoes, the very rolling farmlands of the Gem of the Mountain say *no, never,* a thousand times *no,* to a tax on potatoes!"—when his father spoke like that, he *was* speaking for the people of Boise and Pocatello. Not the crushed Boise or desolate Pocatello of today, true, but the magnificent cities as they had been of yore . . . and the rich farms on either side of the Snake River. . . . And Sun Valley, Moscow, Idaho Falls, American Falls, Weiser, Grangeville, Twin Falls . . . .

"We did not expect you, so we have not many gifts to offer in return," Three Hydrogen Bombs was explaining. "However, there is this one small thing. For you."

Jerry gasped as he took it. It was a pistol, a real, brand-new pistol! And a small box of cartridges. Made in one of the Sioux slave workshops of the middle west that he had heard about. But to hold it in his hand, and to know that it belonged to him!

It was a Crazy Horse forty-five, and, according to all reports, far superior to the Apache weapon that had so long dominated the West, the Geronimo thirty-two. This was a weapon a General of the Armies, a President of the United States, might never hope to own—and it was his!

"I don't know how—Really, I—I—"

"That's all right," the chief told him genially. "Really it is. My son would not approve of giving firearms to palefaces, but I feel that palefaces are like other people—it's the individual that counts. You look like a responsible man for a paleface: I'm sure you'll use the pistol wisely. Now your message."

Jerry collected his faculties and opened the pouch that hung from his neck. Reverently, he extracted the precious document and presented it to the chief.

Three Hydrogen Bombs read it quickly and passed it to his warriors. The last one to get it, Bright Book Jacket, wadded it up into a ball and tossed it back at the white man.

"Bad penmanship," he said.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"And 'receive' is spelled three different ways. The rule is: '*i* before *e*, except after *c*.' But what does it have to do with us? It's addressed to the Seminole chief, Osceola VII, requesting him to order his warriors back to the southern bank of the Delaware River, or to return the hostage given him by the Government of the United States as an earnest of good will and peaceful intentions. We're not Seminole: why show it to us?"

As Jerry Franklin smoothed out the wrinkles in the paper with painful care and replaced the document in his pouch, the confederate ambassador, Sylvester Thomas, spoke up. "I think I might explain," he suggested, glancing inquiringly from face to face. "If you gentlemen don't mind . . . ? It is obvious that the United States Government has heard that an Indian tribe finally crossed the Delaware at this point, and assumed it was the Seminole. The last movement of the Seminole, you will recall, was to Philadelphia, forcing the evacuation of the capitol once more and its transfer to New York City. It was a natural mistake: the communications of the American States, whether Confederate or United—" a small, coughing, diplomatic laugh here— "have not been as good as might have been expected in recent years. It is quite evident that neither this young man nor the government he represents so ably and so well, had any idea that the Sioux had decided to steal a march on his majesty, Osceola VII, and cross the Delaware at Lambertville."

"That's right," Jerry broke in eagerly. "That's exactly right. And now, as the accredited emissary of the President of the United States, it is my duty formally to request that the Sioux nation honor the treaty of eleven years ago as well as the treaty of fifteen —I *think* it was fifteen—years ago, and retire once more behind the banks of the Susquehanna River. I must remind you that when we retired from Pittsburgh, Altoona and Johnstown, you swore that the Sioux would take no more land from us and would protect us in the little we had left. I am certain that the Sioux want to be known as a nation that keeps its promises."

Three Hydrogen Bombs glanced questioningly at the faces of Bright Book Jacket and Hangs A Tale. Then he leaned forward and placed his elbows on his crossed legs. "You speak well, young man," he commented. "You are a credit to your chief. . . . Now, then. Of course the Sioux want to be known as a nation that honors its treaties and keeps its promises. And so forth and so forth. But we have an expanding population. You don't have an expanding population. We need

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more land. You don't use most of the land you have. Should we sit by and see the land go to waste—worse yet, should we see it acquired by the Seminole who already rule a domain stretching from Philadelphia to Key West? Be reasonable. You can retire—to other places. You have most of New England left and a large part of New York State. Surely you can afford to give up New Jersey."

In spite of himself, in spite of his ambassadorial position, Jerry Franklin began yelling. All of a sudden it was too much. It was one thing to shrug your shoulders unhappily back home in the blunted ruins of New York, but here on the spot where the process was actually taking place—no, it was too much.

"What else can we afford to give up? Where else can we retire to? There's nothing left of the United States of America but a handful of square miles, and still we're supposed to move back! In the time of my forefathers, we were a great nation, we stretched from ocean to ocean, so say the legends of my people, and now we are huddled in a miserable corner of our land, starving, filthy, sick, dying and ashamed. In the North, we are oppressed by the Ojibwa and the Cree, we are pushed southward relentlessly by the Montaignais; in the South, the Seminole climb up our land yard by yard; and in the West, the Sioux take a piece more of New Jersey, and the Cheyenne come up and nibble yet another slice out of Elmira and Buffalo. When will it stop—where are we to go?"

The old man shifted uncomfortably at the agony in his voice. "It *is* hard; mind you, I don't deny that it *is* hard. But facts are facts, and weaker peoples always go to the wall. . . . Now, as to the rest of your mission. If we don't retire as you request, you're supposed to ask for the return of your hostage. Sounds reasonable to me. You ought to get something out of it. However, I can't for the life of me remember a hostage. Do we have a hostage from you people?"

His head hanging, his body exhausted, Jerry muttered in misery, "Yes. All the Indian nations on our border have hostages. As earnests of our good will and peaceful intentions."

Bright Book Jacket snapped his fingers. "That girl. Sarah Cameron —Canton— What's-her-name."

Jerry looked up. "Calvin?" he asked. "Could it be *Calvin*? Sarah Calvin? The daughter of the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court?"

Sarah Calvin. That's the one. Been with us for five, six years. You remember, Chief? The girl your son's been playing around with?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Three Hydrogen Bombs looked amazed. "Is *she* the hostage? I thought she was some paleface female he had imported from his plantations in Southern Ohio. Well, well, well. Makes Much Radiation is just a chip off the old block, no doubt about it." He became suddenly serious. "But that girl will never go back. She rather goes for Indian loving. Goes for it all the way. And she has the idea that my son will eventually marry her. Or some such."

He looked Jerry Franklin over. "Tell you what, my boy. Why don't you wait outside while we talk this over? And take the saber. Take it back with you. My son doesn't seem to want it."

Jerry wearily picked up the saber and trudged out of the wigwam.

Dully, uninterestedly, he noticed the band of Sioux warriors around Sam Rutherford and his horses. Then the group parted for a moment, and he saw Sam with a bottle in his hand. Tequila! The damned fool had let the Indians give him Tequila—he was drunk as a pig.

Didn't he know that white men couldn't drink, didn't dare drink? With every inch of their unthreatened arable land under cultivation for foodstuffs, they were all still on the edge of starvation. There was absolutely no room in their economy for such luxuries as intoxicating beverages—and no white man in the usual course of a lifetime got close to so much as a glassful of the stuff. Give him a whole bottle of Tequila and he was a stinking mess.

As Sam was now. He staggered back and forth in dipping semicircles, holding the bottle by its neck and waving it idiotically. The Sioux chuckled, dug each other in the ribs and pointed. Sam vomited loosely down the rags upon his chest and belly, tried to take one more drink, and fell over backwards. The bottle continued to pour over his face until it was empty. He was snoring loudly. The Sioux shook their heads, made grimaces of distaste, and walked away.

Jerry looked on and nursed the pain in his heart. Where could they go? What could they do? And what difference did it make? Might as well be as drunk as Sammy there. At least you wouldn't be able to feel.

He looked at the saber in one hand, the bright new pistol in the other. Logically, he should throw them away. Wasn't it ridiculous when you came right down to it, wasn't it pathetic—a white man carrying weapons?

Sylvester Thomas came out of the tent. "Get your horses ready, my dear sir," he whispered. "Be prepared to ride as soon as I come back. Hurry!"

The young man slouched over to the horses and followed in-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

structions—might as well do that as anything else. Ride where? Do what?

He lifted Sam Rutherford up and tied him upon his horse. Go back home? Back to the great, the powerful, the respected, capitol of what had once been the United States of America?

Thomas came back with a bound and gagged girl in his grasp. She wriggled madly. Her eyes crackled with anger and rebellion. She kept trying to kick the Confederate Ambassador.

She wore the rich robes of an Indian princess. Her hair was braided in the style currently fashionable among Sioux women. And her face had been stained carefully with some darkish dye.

Sarah Calvin. The daughter of the Chief Justice. They tied her to the pack horse.

"Chief Three Hydrogen Bombs," the Negro explained. "He feels his son plays around too much with paleface females. He wants this one out of the way. The boy has to settle down, prepare for the responsibilities of chieftainship. This may help. And listen, the old man likes you. He told me to tell you something."

"I'm grateful. I'm grateful for every favor, no matter how small, how humiliating."

Sylvester Thomas shook his head decisively. "Don't be bitter, young sir. If you want to go on living you have to be alert. And you can't be alert and bitter at the same time. . . . The Chief wants you to know there's no point in your going home. He couldn't say it openly in council, but the reason the Sioux moved in on Trenton has nothing to do with the Seminole on the other side. It has to do with the Ojibwa-Cree-Montaignais situation in the North. They've decided to take over the eastern seaboard—that includes what's left of your country. By this time, they're probably in Yonkers or the Bronx, somewhere inside New York City. In a matter of hours, your government will no longer be in existence. The Chief had advance word of this and felt it necessary for the Sioux to establish some sort of bridgehead on the coast before matters were permanently stabilized. By occupying New Jersey he is preventing an Ojibwa-Seminole junction. But he likes you, as I said, and wants you warned against going home."

"Fine. But where *do* I go? Up a rain cloud? Down a well?"

"No," Thomas admitted without smiling. He hoisted Jerry up on his horse. "You might come back with me to the Confederacy—" He paused, and when Jerry's sullen expression did not change, he went on, "Well, then, may I suggest—and mind you, this is my advice, not the Chief's—head straight out to Asbury Park. It's not far away—you can make it in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reasonable time if you ride hard. According to reports I've overheard, there should be units of the United States Navy there, the Tenth Fleet, to be exact."

"Tell me," Jerry asked, bending down. "Have you heard any other news? Anything about the rest of the world? How has it been with those people—the Russkies, the Sovietskis, whatever they were called—the ones the United States had so much to do with years ago?"

"According to several of the chief's councillors, the Soviet Russians were having a good deal of difficulty with people called Tatars. I *think* they were called Tatars. But, my good sir, you should be on your way."

Jerry leaned down further and grasped his hand. "Thanks," he said. "You've gone to a lot of trouble for me. I'm grateful."

"That's quite all right," said Mr. Thomas earnestly. "After all, by the rocket's red glare, and all that. We were a single nation once."

Jerry moved off, leading the other two horses. He set a fast pace, exercising the minimum of caution made necessary by the condition of the road. By the time they reached Route 33, Sam Rutherford, though not altogether sober or well, was able to sit in his saddle. They could then untie Sarah Calvin and ride with her between them.

She cursed and wept. "Filthy paleface! Foul, ugly, stinking whiteskins! I'm an Indian, can't you see I'm an Indian? My skin isn't white—it's brown, brown!"

They kept riding.

Asbury Park was a dismal clatter of rags and confusion and refugees. There were refugees from the north, from Perth Amboy, from as far as Newark. There were refugees from Princeton in the west, flying before the Sioux invasion. And from the south, from Atlantic City—even unbelievably, from distant Camden—were still other refugees, with stories of a sudden Seminole attack, an attempt to flank the armies of Three Hydrogen Bombs.

The three horses were stared at enviously, even in their lathered, exhausted condition. They represented food to the hungry, the fastest transportation possible to the fearful. Jerry found the saber very useful. And the pistol was even better—it had only to be exhibited. Few of these people had ever seen a pistol in action: they had a mighty, superstitious fear of firearms. . . .

With this fact discovered, Jerry kept the pistol out nakedly in his right hand when he walked into the United States Naval Depot on the beach at Asbury Park. Sam Rutherford was at his side; Sarah Calvin walked sobbing behind.

He announced their family backgrounds to Admiral Milton Chester. The son of the Undersecretary of State. The daughter

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The oldest son of the Senator from Idaho. "And now. Do you recognize the authority of this document?"

Admiral Chester read the wrinkled commission slowly, spelling out the harder words to himself. He twisted his head respectfully when he had finished, looking first at the seal of the United States on the paper before him, and then at the glittering pistol in Jerry's hand.

"Yes," he said at last. "I recognize its authority. Is that a real pistol?"

Jerry nodded. "A Crazy Horse forty-five. The latest. *How* do you recognize its authority?"

The admiral spread his hands. "Everything is confused out here. The latest word I've received is that there are Ojibwa warriors in Manhattan—that there is no longer any United States Government. And yet this—" he bent over the document once more— "this is a commission by the President himself, appointing you full plenipotentiary. To the Seminole, of course. But full plenipotentiary. The last official appointment, to the best of my knowledge, of the President of the United States of America."

He reached forward and touched the pistol in Jerry Franklin's hand curiously and inquiringly. He nodded to himself, as if he'd come to a decision. He stood up, and saluted with a flourish.

"I hereby recognize you as the last legal authority of the United States Government. And I place my fleet at your disposal."

"Good." Jerry stuck the pistol in his belt. He pointed with the saber. "Do you have enough food and water for a long voyage?"

"No, sir," Admiral Chester said. "But that can be arranged in a few hours at most. May I escort you aboard, sir?"

He gestured proudly down the beach and past the surf to where the three, forty-five foot, gaff-rigged schooners rode at anchor. "The United States Tenth Fleet, sir. Awaiting your orders."

Hours later when the three vessels were standing out to sea, the admiral came to the cramped main cabin where Jerry Franklin was resting. Sam Rutherford and Sarah Calvin were asleep in the bunks above.

"And the orders, sir . . . ?"

Jerry Franklin walked out on the narrow deck, looked up at the taut, patched sails. "Sail east."

"East, sir? *Due* east?"

"Due east all the way. To the fabled lands of Europe. To a place where a white man can stand at last on his own two legs. Where he need not fear persecution. Where he need not fear slavery. Sail east, Admiral, until we discover a new and hopeful world,—a world of freedom!"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If, along with goodly thousands of others, you have experienced the pleasure of such Clarke books as PRELUDE TO SPACE *or* CHILDHOOD'S END *(to mention only the first two that leap to mind), you need not be told of Clarke's delicate touch with science fiction or of his powerful grip on science fact. But Clarke is also a highly independent thinker, and a courageous one—as witness his determination to reason out, as a poetic materialist, the ultimate impact of the Cybernetic Revolution upon those imponderables we know as Mind and Body and Soul.*

OF MIND AND MATTER

by ARTHUR C. CLARKE

FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS THE human race has debated, with singular lack of agreement, such questions as the existence of the soul, the meaning of personality, the relationship between the mind and the body, and—above all—the possibility of survival after death. The fact that the debate is still just as heated as when it began in the Late Neolithic Period strongly suggests that the wrong questions have been asked, and certain spectacular developments of the last decade indicate, with equal force, that now is a good time to recast them into a form that makes sense.

Those developments are purely scientific—a fact which will upset a great many people with vested interests in some of the pseudo-answers now current. They lie almost entirely in the fields of biophysics, neurology and electronics, and at first sight it may seem improbable that such areas of modern technology could have any conceivable relation to the great questions of philosophy and religion.

But four centuries ago, it would have seemed equally unlikely that several thousand years of cosmological speculation, culminating in the poetic fantasies of *Paradise Lost,* could have been swept away in a few decades by a couple of lenses in a tube. Today, we are witnessing another scientific break-through, in an area that affects us much more personally

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

than any astronomical discovery could possibly do.

It is now obvious that we are approaching, more closely than anyone would have dared to hope a few years ago, the basic secrets of life itself. Such fabulous tools as the electron microscope, which has given us clear pictures of the very building-blocks of living organisms, are showing us how the bridge was crossed between the world of inorganic materials and the richer world of life. It is only a matter of time before that bridge is crossed again in some laboratory; whether that moment is ten or a hundred years from now is not in itself important. Many details of the fantastically complex electro-chemistry of life will elude us for generations yet, but it cannot be doubted now that there is nothing inherently mysterious, or fundamentally unknowable, in the processes that build and power our bodies. That makes them none the less marvellous; real knowledge, when it dispels superstition, seldom diminishes awe. (For can the petty cosmos of Milton compare with the grandeur of the universe we know today?)

It seems possible that the brain will hold its secrets longer than the body, but even here remarkable advances have been made towards an understanding of the processes of memory and reason —all the complex of phenomena which we group under the term "thought." In this case the scientific break-through has occurred at two distinct points; on the one hand the mechanism of the brain itself has been investigated, and on the other electronic devices have been built which show—often with startling realism—many of the behavior-patterns of sentient creatures. And perhaps most significant of all, the large-scale development of giant computers has done much to destroy the illusion that there is something transcendental about the brain, beyond all possibility of duplication or imitation by machine.

Almost all the basic activities of the mind have now been reproduced, more or less successfully, by electronic means. Memory, purposeful reaction to the environment, ability to draw logical or mathematical conclusions —these are now commonplace features of machines being mass-produced for the commercial market. The ability to learn from past experience—to profit from mistakes so that they will not be made again—has also been demonstrated on the laboratory scale. Even the all-too-human attribute of total unpredictability can be incorporated in a machine if desired; and sometimes it *is* desirable, in carefully-regulated amounts. For there are problems that can drive both men and machines crazy if they try to solve them, and then

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the only thing to do is to make a random choice.

The situation has been somewhat confused by the determination of the computer-designers not to let the popular name "electronic brains" be applied to their offspring. For once, however, the public, and not the experts, is right. Today's computers *are* electronic brains by any reasonable definition of the phrase. It is true that they have the intelligence of single-minded tapeworms (though they usually possess much better memories), but this does not alter the basic situation.

Important though electronic computers will be in science, business and technology, it is their profound philosophical implications which we are concerned with here. For they have shown —in principle, at least—that though Mind needs a vehicle, that vehicle can be of many forms.

Before we see where this leads us, it is necessary to deal with a persistent red-herring. Many people have been so impressed by the gulf between even the most advanced electronic computer and the most moronic human mind that they have denied the possibility of bridging it. The brain of a man, it has been pointed out, contains approximately ten billion fundamental switching units, capable of cross-connection in an almost infinite number of ways. A much-quoted "proof" that no electronic equivalent of the brain is possible states that such a machine would have to be as large as the Empire State Building and would need as much water as flows over Niagara to keep its billions of vacuum tubes cool.

It is amusing to see how quickly this has become an argument that such a machine is perfectly possible. Since the first computers were built, the bulky, heat-generating vacuum tube has been largely replaced by the rice-grain-sized transistor. We no longer need the whole Empire State Building: one floor will do, and the existing plumbing will provide all the cooling water required. But even this reduction in scale has now been surpassed; the transistor itself is challenged by the yet tinier and still more efficient cryotron (a switch literally as big as a hair, operating on the principle of superconductivity). It is believed that one of today's giant computers could be packed into a small suitcase if it were redesigned with cryotrons as its fundamental circuit elements. So much, then, for the Empire State School of computer criticism.

All this does not mean that we will be able to build electronic equivalents of the human brain in the near or even the remote future. But the feat is not intrinsically impossible, and when one looks back at the progress of technology during the past hundred

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

years, one would be very foolish indeed to declare categorically that this will never be achieved. Most top-rank computer scientists, if they let their hair down, would probably agree that sooner or later we will find ourselves dealing with mechanical entities which will pass every conceivable test for intelligence and self-awareness which we might apply to another human being. They will contain fewer units than many electronic systems already in existence—the telephone network of the United States, for example—though they will be a great deal more complicated.

A good many people find it somehow degrading to realize that the human brain, like the human body, is "only" an electrochemical machine and flatly refuse to admit it. This attitude is completely absurd. The Taj Mahal is "only" a mass of stone; the roof of the Sistine Chapel only plaster and paint. *The material is unimportant; the pattern is all that matters.* Should an athlete feel that sport is worthless because of the undeniable fact that his body is an elaborate artifice of pumps, levers and elastic fibres? Of course not; indeed, it adds zest and interest to his performance. (It is no coincidence that the first man to run a mile in four minutes is a doctor.) It may well be that we will learn to think properly and effectively only when we know *how* we think.

We must not commit the elementary error of supposing that the mechanism of the human brain is necessarily similar in detail to that of today's—or tomorrow's—electronic computers. It is certainly not, if only because of the different structural elements involved. This, however, is quite unimportant; what matters is that memory, personality—all the components which make up every human being and distinguish him from all other men who have ever lived—are ( ) the by-product of data-storage and processing in an extremely complex computer *of some kind.* (That blank parenthesis, by the way is to allow you to insert the word 'merely' if it helps your feelings. It will affect the situation just about as much as the actions of Kipling's "Village that Voted the Earth was Flat".)

It may be no serious oversimplification to say that a man is the sum of his abilities—the circuit networks through which he observes the external world and decides what to do about it—and his memories—the storage banks holding his accumulated experience. There may be other components, but these are the basic ones which between them largely, and perhaps completely, account for the personality and behavior of every one of us.

The storage of information can

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be carried out in many ways—by marks on paper, by grooves in wax, by holes punched in cards—or, as Nature appears to do it, by coding based upon molecular structures like immensely elongated Yale keys. The physical basis is immaterial; as stated before, only the pattern itself matters. And from this simple fact, the most awe-inspiring results follow. Even those readers who have found nothing surprising or controversial in what has gone before had better fasten their seat-belts at this point!

One characteristic of a pattern is that it can be reproduced; a good example is the way in which endless indistinguishable copies of a symphony can be stamped out from a master-recording. (Indistinguishable? Not strictly speaking, but the differences can be made so small that they are of no practical importance.) Now the duplication of a human personality would be an immensely more difficult problem—*but it is not a fundamentally different one.* We cannot at this primitive stage of our technology, begin to guess how it could be achieved, any more than Beethoven could have imagined how a performance of the Ninth Symphony could be snatched out of time and saved for eternity.

The basic problem is that of recording and playing back—using those terms in a general sense—the vast quantity of information involved in defining personality and memory. Yet the actual storage space required is quite small. If Nature manages to compress the pattern of a human body into a couple of cells invisible to the eye, and the memories of a lifetime into a lump of jelly six inches across, is it expecting too much to suppose that Man may one day perform the same feat with a few cubic yards of electronics? After all, we could now pack the Library of Congress into a shoe-box if we had to, and the amount of information there must be comparable with that defining an individual human being.

It therefore follows that, in a strictly scientific sense, reincarnation is theoretically possible. If one could reproduce the physical pattern of an individual down to the molecular fine-structure which is the library of the mind, there would be no way of distinguishing himself between the original and the duplicate. It would be totally meaningless to ask "Which is really John Doe?" They would both be.

If you think that this is absurd fantasy, of no practical importance, you have a surprise coming. For it happened to *you* during the last few months; it will have happened to me by the time you read these words. This is a simple statement of fact—though a fact that could never have been

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

imagined before the tools of modern science were turned upon the mechanism of life.

The atoms in our bodies are in a state of constant flux, being replaced so rapidly by others from the food we eat that we are completely rebuilt every few weeks. Even the bones are involved in this ceaseless ebb and flow of matter. Every one of us moves through the world like a flame, seeking fuel from his environment, assembling it into a momentary pattern, then rejecting the smoke and ash. Only the flame is – relatively – unchanging, until it gutters to extinction at the end of life.

It has been said that no man ever steps twice into the same river; it is almost equally true that no man ever looks at his face twice in the mirror. The flow of flesh may be slower than the movement of water to the sea, but it is no less inexorable.

We are involved, therefore, in a kind of continuous reincarnation almost as marvellous as any other type that has ever been postulated. At the same time, we can see that another popular idea of the mystics – transmigration through lower animals – can have no logical basis. The personality and memory of a human being could no more be squeezed into the limited storage capacity of any other vertebrate (still less an invertebrate) than could the entire musical heritage of mankind be recorded on a 6-inch disc.

The above argument now enables us to give a definite and somewhat unexpected answer to the ancient question of immortality. What happens to us when we die can differ in no significant way from what happens to the information punched on an I.B.M. card – when the card is burned. But suppose the information is also stored in another place and is used to prepare a fresh card. There would then be no way of distinguishing between the old card and the new.

Some people may console themwith the thought that such "master-cards" (using the term in a completely general sense to mean any suitable storage device) may exist somehow, somewhere; others will consider such an attitude slightly egocentric. Yet even if no records are in existence from which anyone alive today could be re-created, this may not always be the case. If it seems absurd to talk of storing a human being on a few miles of tape, that is only because we cannot yet build the input and output devices which could perform the feat. If the day should ever come when this is possible, Death will have lost its power over the minds of Men.

I have little doubt that a great many people will consider these speculations naively mechanistic,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

because they cannot reconcile such imponderables as personality, intelligence — even the Soul, if one cares to use the word — with the concepts of electronics or Information Theory. Such an attitude is a hang-over from Nineteenth Century materialism — though this charge will make many critics doubly indignant. By the word "machine," far too many otherwise educated people still envisage a contraption of cogs and cranks and levers: they are still mentally in the steam-engine era. They cannot imagine the subtlety and sophistication of the great computers which are now leaving the laboratory, some of which may comprise a million circuit elements and be as large as a house — *yet contain practically no moving parts*, though they may carry out a hundred thousand operations a second. The machines we are building now differ in kind as well as degree from all that mankind has ever seen before — and their evolution is barely beginning.

No one can say where it will lead, but glimpsed vaguely in the mists of the future is a dream — I will not say a possibility—which has long been hinted at in most of the religions of the world. Since pattern alone is important, can mind and intelligence exist without matter? In the relationship between, for example, purely electrical entities or packages of radiation? There is some evidence that space itself has a fundamental structure, and could therefore in principle be used as a medium for storing and processing information.

And thus, Intelligence, which arose from the interactions of matter and has used it as a vehicle for so many ages, may at last break loose from its origin, as a butterfly escapes from the prison of its chrysalid. And like the butterfly climbing into the summer sky, it may go on to orders of experience completely beyond the reach of its earlier metamorphoses.

Where are we today in the hierarchy which, ages hence, may culminate in something which only the word "Spirit" can describe? Are we the chrysalis, the larva — or merely the unhatched egg?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

During the last 23-od years, mention of Charles G. Finney's name has invariably been accompanied by reference to his unique and dazzling THE CIRCUS OF DR. LAO. *But Mr. Finney's talents are too impressive to be identified primarily with just one book, and in all justice there should soon be another equally worthy volume to rub shoulders with the good doctor on the bookshelf.* The Horsenaping of Hotspur *(F&SF, Aug., '58) was, incredibly, Mr. Finney's first short story; however there are, wonderfully, signs that it may have been only the first of many, and there is hope that one day there will be enough for a hardcover collection. . . . Mr. Finney this time offers a wry tale of a nightcrawler in the sunny backyards of Everyday.*

The Black Retriever

by CHARLES G. FINNEY

I WAS FIRST MADE AWARE OF THE beast one Sunday morning in May. I was, at the moment, shaving. Our youngest daughter came running in, breathlessly as was her wont, and announced there was a big black dog in the patio.

I said nonsense and continued shaving. I knew the patio gates were closed; I had closed them myself. I said so to our daughter.

"But this dog doesn't use gates," she cried. "He just jumps over the wall."

Again I said nonsense, for the wall was five feet high, and it had been there five years, and in all that time I had never known a dog to jump it.

"But it did," our little girl insisted. "And it's killing things out there." And she ran off for another look.

In a moment she let out one of her shrill yells. "It's on the patio wall! It's caught a bird! Come and see!"

I switched off the electric shaver, said things not appropriate to be said before a little girl,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and went outside and looked.

I saw—or thought I saw, because I wear trifocals and sometimes look through the wrong lens tier—a black blur on the patio wall. It moved along and disappeared. "See!" said our daughter. "It's jumped down and now it's gone. Look, it dropped the bird."

"Well," I said, "we will investigate later. Right now it's time to get to church."

And, our preparations completed, we packed ourselves into our Hillman Minx and drove off. I thought no more of the black blur or the black dog that I had seen.

In the afternoon my wife and I decided to sit in the patio while our daughters watched television. Our two little dogs elected to accompany us. The Cairn slept. The Dachshund dug a hole beside the flowering pomegranate. My wife and I talked of sundry things: television shows, shopping, the necessity of having the Minx greased.

The Dachshund stopped digging and began to snoop around the patio, sniffing at the shrubs and bushes. He disappeared behind some greasewood and then appeared again, this time with something in his mouth. He brought it to us. It was a small dead bird.

"Oh!" said my wife. "Snorkel! How could you!"

"He's innocent," I said. "He merely found it. That other dog killed it. Roberta told me."

"Other dog?" she asked. "What other dog? You surely don't mean this lazy thing." And she indicated Mac, the sleeping Cairn.

"No," I said. "This was a strange dog. A big black one. It leaped over the wall into the patio and killed this bird. Then it jumped on top of the patio wall and swaggered around."

"I never heard of such a thing," said my wife. "Did *you* see it?"

"I saw a blur," I said. "But Roberta saw it plainly. She even saw it kill the bird. I didn't believe her at the time, but here the bird is, so the story must be true."

I took the little bird away from Snorkel and buried it in the alley, covering the grave with stones so that it would be protected.

A few days later I was in the patio again, this time neighboring across the fence with my friend Mr. George, who lived next door.

He was angry. At his feet lay the body of his Siamese cat. It was chewed and torn.

"A big black retriever did it," said Mr. George. "It jumped the wall, cornered the cat and killed it. Then it jumped up on top of the wall, walked around a little, leaped down and disappeared. It happened so quickly there was nothing I could do about it."

"I know," I said. "It happened

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

here, too. Only in our yard the thing killed a bird. Did it look like a blur to you?"

"Blur? Of course not! I saw it plainly—a big black retriever. They're usually rather gentle looking. But not this one. It was a brute. I think I'll put some poisoned meat on top of the wall. If it's so fond of parading on patio walls, maybe it'll return and find the meat. That ought to fix it."

A grotesque pattern evolved. Every time I met an acquaintance in the neighborhood, up came the subject of the black retriever. If the one I was talking to had not seen it himself he was sure to have a neighbor who had, a neighbor whose patio had been visited by the beast and in whose patio the beast had killed something . . . a pet rabbit, a cat, a puppy, a bird, once even a badger. A family down the street had a pet badger in their patio. The black retriever had jumped over their patio wall, caught the badger sleeping near the mouth of its burrow and killed it.

Despite what my neighbor Mr. George had said, I soon ascertained that neither he nor any of the others actually had seen the black dog clearly. In the main the one I talked to agreed it was a retriever of some sort, but one man insisted it was a poodle and another said just as insistently it was a black Airedale. Some of them used the word I had used to describe it: a blur. But everyone agreed that it was black and that they saw it walking on their patio walls. As for its reality, blur or no blur, there were all those dead things to prove that its visitations had been made.

We lived in a suburban development. The houses were pretty much alike; the inhabitants very much alike—middle class people with middle class jobs. The children attended the district's middle class school. It was a tolerant neighborhood of friendly people.

Everything there was a little humdrum and, if you will, rather mediocre. But it was a pleasant, comfortable place to live, and the standard of living was probably as high as has ever been attained by a group of Homo sapiens since that biped began to walk upon the face of the earth.

No hordes of beggars swarmed the streets. No warring armies prowled about the land. If the people in that suburban development wanted water they turned a tap. If they wanted heat they jiggled a thermostat. If they wanted coolness they switched on an air conditioner. If they wanted light they pressed a button. If they wanted to go somewhere they got into an automobile and drove there at speeds ranging from twenty-five to eighty-five

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

miles an hour. They didn't need servants; electricity did for them what no staff of servants could ever do.

And now it seemed odd, incredibly odd, that a black dog, a black retriever, was leaping their patio walls and killing things that they loved.

At first various individuals tried various expedients to apprehend the retriever and put it away where it could do no more harm. My immediate neighbor, Mr. George, allowed me to talk him out of his poisoned meat project, my argument being that some innocent creature—even a child—might suffer. Instead, for he was a mechanically minded man, he contrived a long noose-and-spring arrangement and set it on his patio wall. His idea was to ensnare the retriever.

Another equally ingenious neighbor constructed a large doghouse with a hair-trigger door; he baited it with choice dog foods. His idea was to trap the retriever.

A third, an archery enthusiast, took down his long bow and stationed himself at odd times in his alley. His idea was to impale the retriever.

None of these expedients worked.

The black beast visited the patio wall on which the noose was positioned, ate the bait, sprung the spring, but was not ensnared.

It visited the doghouse arrangement, ate the bait, sprung the door, but was not entrapped.

It showed itself to the archery enthusiast, presenting a good target to his arrow, but was not transfixed.

Meanwhile, it continued its depredations. Did anyone set out new tender plants, those plants were sure to be dug up or torn out in a day or two; and everybody said it was the retriever that did it.

Sometimes days would pass without any fresh reports of trouble, but sooner or later, inevitably, someone would see the black blur on his patio wall, and, lying near by, the dead thing which the retriever had killed.

My neighbor Mr. George and I summoned an informal meeting, a council of the elders we called it, of the ones in the area who had felt the bite of a the black blur. We thought that by uniting our efforts we could conceptualize an aim, syncretize a program, finalize an operational method, and concretize the black retriever's doom. After all, other settlements, other civilized communities had been plagued by intrusive horrors, and had been able, through drastic communal action, to abate them. Surely, Mr. George and I argued, we should be able to do as much.

We held the meeting in my

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

patio, and a dozen people came. Our discussion was diffuse and not the least bit parliamentary, but it finally boiled down to one conclusion: The only thing to do was to shoot the retriever.

It was against the law to discharge firearms in the area, but we thought we would be able to get the police commissioner, or the mayor and council, or something or somebody to relax the ban long enough for us to carry out our purpose. So Mr. George and I were deputized to confer with the mayor and police commissioner and seek authorization to stage a dog hunt in our alleys.

Such authorization was promptly refused. There was in existence, the commissioner pointed out, an organization which offered a perfectly obvious solution to our trouble. That was the City Animal Shelter, a euphemism for dog pound. Why, he demanded, hadn't we gone to the shelter in the first place?

The answer to that was that we hadn't thought of it. However, now that it had come to our attention, we certainly would.

And we did. The pound master listened to us, smiled, and said he would send a man out. He wanted to know on what days and what hours of those days the retriever was mostly likely to show up.

We protested that the beast did not operate on a fixed time table. Sometimes it came at dawn, sometimes at high noon, sometimes around dinner. It could be on a Thursday as well as on a Monday.

"I was just trying to narrow it down," said the poundmaster.

The dogcatcher came out in his wire-cage truck, equipped with a lariat, heavy gloves and a single barreled .410 shotgun. He was a businesslike young man in cowboy boots and cowboy hat.

I was at work at the time of his appearance, but my wife told me what happened.

"He snooped around the alleys a while," she said. "All the dogs in the neighborhood barked their heads off—just as if they were trying to warn the retriever. He got real hot and tired, and Mrs. Betty took pity on him and asked him to come in and have a can of beer and cool off. He had the can of beer and then made a pass at Mrs. Betty. She ordered him out of her house and called the animal shelter to report him. Before she got the number of the shelter she heard a gun go off and looked out to see what it was. He had just shot Mrs. Stella's Weimaraner. Mrs. Stella ran out screaming. So did I. That is, I ran out. I wasn't screaming. The dogcatcher said he guessed he'd made some kind of mistake. The Weimaraner, he insisted, looked black, real black, when he shot it, but now that it was dead it didn't look so black any more."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I started to say something, but she interrupted me. "Wait, I'm not through yet. While all that was going on, the black retriever, the real thing, you know, jumped into Mrs. Wilhelmina's patio and killed her toy Chihauhua. Then it paraded around on Mrs. Wilhelmina's patio wall for a while and then disappeared. Mrs. Wilhelmina is just sick. The doctor came and gave her a sedative. Of course the dogcatcher was still at Mrs. Stella's when this happened, so he didn't know about it."

And there it was. The black retriever was still on the prowl. Everything we had done or tried to do had been turned against us sardonically.

Two days later little Margarita, a child down the street, was bitten twice by a dog while she was playing in her yard. The bites weren't very serious—just skin punctures—but nobody knew whether or not the dog which had bitten her was rabid. Nobody had seen the dog except Margarita. She said it was big and dark, and everybody said it must be the retriever. Everybody agreed the retriever was rabid, too; that was the only way to account for its actions.

But this didn't add up, for rabid dogs die very quickly, and the retriever had been around for quite a while. However, there was no arguing the fact that the retriever might have become rabid just lately, and that was what caused it to bite Margarita.

Margarita, incidentally, was given prompt medical care and was as good as new the next day. Everybody insisted the retriever was the dog which had bitten her; efforts to apprehend the brute were, as a consequence, doubled.

Another council of the elders was summoned. We decided not to go to the police and not to go to the dogcatcher. We would do this ourselves.

Mr. James, who had hunted a great deal in his boyhood, devised the modus operandi. We would secret ourselves in blinds as duck hunters do, await the arrival of the retriever, and shoot him down.

A successful blind, said Mr. James, must be something that blends into the landscape; hence, duck blinds are made of rushes and bushes, things the ducks see all the time and are not afraid of.

But for the retriever such things would not do. What would do were automobiles. The retriever had seen plenty of automobiles and was used to them.

We men, said Mr. James, would simply sit in our automobiles in the alleys or under the ramadas, wherever our automobiles customarily were parked, and would await the retriever. When he came along whoever saw him first would shoot him.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

That would be that; the police could howl their heads off.

Mr. James assigned certain men to hold watch and ward in their cars at certain times of the day. The plan seemed foolproof.

My first shift came at five-thirty in the afternoon. I checked with and relieved my neighbor Mr. James who had been sitting in his car in the alley since three. I decided to take my station in my car rather than his. I was parked only a few feet behind him.

He chided me for being late, handed me his gun—a beautiful little Remington .22 automatic rifle—told me he hadn't seen anything except dozens of kids and scores of harmless dogs, remarked that Mrs. Betty—the one the dogcatcher had made a pass at—was wearing shorts and a Bikini bra, asseverated that this whole dogwatch was a lot of nonsense, warned me not to shoot without first making certain of what it was that I was shooting at, announced that he was going to have a drink and to perdition with the black retriever, and concluded by saying that this was his one and only trick at the dogwatch wheel—he wasn't going to waste any more time at it. The two and a half hours he had been sitting in his car had been two and a half hours lost, and he was finished, through, ended and done.

I got into my car, laid the little Remington across my knees and began to read the collected poems of Dylan Thomas. It was a beautiful late afternoon. The children played, the birds sang, etc. The Welsh bard sang also, but he wasn't getting through to me. I put the book down and, for want of something else to do, looked into my rear-view mirror.

Through some unusual property of the atmosphere the mirror achieved a magnifying effect. Things seen in it were as large and clear, almost, as those on a Vistavision screen in a drive-in movie. I swiveled it around, picking up different views.

The chief attraction was Mrs. Betty in her shorts and Bikini halter. She was hanging up clothes on her clothesline; and, looking at her, I could not help recalling the dogcatcher and his flaming moment of temptation. She was a brunette.

It occurred to me simultaneously that there had been no proof adduced so far that the black retriever was a male. No one had ever seen the thing very clearly or very closely. How strange it would be, I thought, if the retriever were actually Mrs. Betty. That she, at certain unholy hours, transformed herself into the animal and did the things it did. I looked at her again in the mirror and watched as she adjusted her bra. There was something distinctly animal-like in her motion.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Far afield, I said, my thoughts are straying far afield. Nevertheless, I kept the mirror focused upon her.

She was behind the clothesline now, hanging up towels; and one of the towels hung down and all I could see of Mrs. Betty was her legs, the towel hiding the rest of her. Thus viewed, she gave the impression of wearing nothing at all. Then she hung up a sheet, and her feet were all I could see. Then she moved out of the mirror's field, and I could not see her at all.

I jiggled the mirror to get Mrs. Betty back on the screen; instead of her I picked up a black blur. It was far down the alley; it moved. I was torn, as it were, between trying to watch the black blur and trying to pick up Mrs. Betty again. I jiggled the mirror more vigorously and lost everything. All I could see was my own face. I was wearing a queer expression.

There was a scratching above, and I became aware that something had leaped on top of the car and was clawing to retain its footing. The alley was vacant. Mrs. Betty had disappeared. I was all alone, sitting there in the car with a .22 rifle and a book of poetry. And something was on top of the car, scratching and sprawling around.

A drop of foam or froth fell on the windshield. The thing on top of the car was slavering, and this blob of foam had dropped from its mouth.

Then a black shape fell lumplike on the hood of the car, scrambling and clawing around. It regained its feet and stared through the windshield at me. It had horrible yellow eyes. I could not shoot through the windshield. I was too terrified to get out of the car and attempt to shoot from on foot. The windows of the car were open. It would only be a matter of moments until the black thing discovered they were open and came in to get me.

Other men, I knew, were off elsewhere in the neighborhood sitting as I was sitting.

I knew I must give them the alarm.

I pressed my hand on the horn button and honked loud and long.

The horn's bellowing woke me up. Apparently I had gone to sleep over Dylan Thomas's *Hold Hard These Ancient Minutes In a Cuckoo's Mouth*. There was no black beast on the hood of my car. There was no black blur in the alley. When Mrs. Betty came up to see what the honking was about she was dressed in modest housewifely garb and looked just as she always did—distinctly homely.

Obviously I had simply drowsed over a cryptic poem and fallen asleep. The rest I had

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dreamed. They say daytime nightmares are the worst of all.

We called off the stakeout the next day. Nobody had seen anything. Everybody felt rather foolish. Several of the others had also fallen asleep. One of these diffidently asked us other drowsy ones if we had had bad dreams. One and all, we ridiculed the idea, but our ridicule seemed rather artificial. I even had such bad taste as to inquire of the diffident one if he had dreamed about Mrs. Betty. He looked at me a long time before denying it. The other ones who had fallen asleep looked at me a long time also.

We ran the retriever to earth—or at least we ran *a* retriever to earth. She was a big black bitch and had a litter of pups in a culvert pipe in the arroyo. Some of the children of the neighborhood, playing in the arroyo, saw her run into the culvert with a pigeon in her mouth. They told us elders, and we called the dog pound. A different dogcatcher came out this time. He shot the black bitch when she attacked him, and took away her puppies.

We concluded the dog had been raiding our yards to feed her pups, and had dropped the dead things we had found when we flushed her at her depredations. It was a satisfactory conclusion.

But a very unsatisfactory thing happened on the heels of that conclusion. I went out to wash my car, and, there on the top of it, were dog's footprints and scratches.

HELP WANTED

Because of the recent upheaval in newsstand and distribution, many dealers are not being adequately supplied with copies of FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION.

If your dealer does not have it, you will be doing a real service for us—for the dealer—and perhaps for yourself, if you will send us his name and address. We will make every effort to see that your dealer is properly supplied in the future. Write to: *Newsdealer Service, FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION,* 527 Madison Avenue, New York 22, N. Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Those who have read THE SECRET MASTERS *and* FACES IN A DUSTY PICTURE *know, of course, that Kersh is one of those ambidexterous writers, as much at ease with the dreaming left hand of science fiction as with the muscular right arm of war and the world. What happens when such a formidable combination goes to work on a plot dealing with the sinister mental diseases of plants? Yes, the* mental *diseases of* plants. *A neurose, after all, by any other name. . . .*

The Terribly Wild Flowers

by GERALD KERSH

"THERE IS NO 'OFFICIAL SECRECY' which can totally blanket the origins of the so-called mysterious fire that destroyed the botanical gardens at Forfex in Kent. But in this age of panic it was regarded as expedient to keep the matter quiet until the situation was well under control—which the authorities hope and believe is now the case. (Oh, ay, we live in hopes! As to the Government's viewpoint on Psychological Warfare, as they term it—when in doubt, keep your mouth shut.) Hysteria is often best treated by a sharp slap in the face, but how does one slap a billion faces simultaneously? And we do live in a period of mass hysteria, wild credulity, mad conjecture and impending stampede. The intelligent observer must feel, just now, as the American cowhand must feel when riding herd with a thunderstorm impending . . ."

I quote Dr. Angus Huish, Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, sometime of Edinburgh University, as one might gather from his dour, pawky manner of expressing himself. "If the scribblers of so-called 'Science' features had got hold of this, particularly at the time it occurred," Dr. Huish continued, "a generation nutured on fear and rumor, that cut its teeth on flying saucers and weaned its imagination on flight by rocket anywhere out of this world, might have lost the little that remains to it of Reason . . ."

There is a childishness about your abstract thinkers (of the Huish type) who do not forsee

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

consequences. Consider, for example, Einstein and his atom bombs, or Nobel and his "safe" nitroglycerin; rocket researchers and their "sputniks", or the inventors of useful insecticides and paralyzing Nerve Gas; or the Philadelphia cancer researcher and his dangerous crystals isolated from inflamed cells—a tubeful of which cost a million dollars in research—who, asked if they might be used for war, replied, appalled, "Yes, but that is not what they are *for!*" God knows whether such men are a blessing or a curse to Mankind.

Great as he was in his field of medical research, there was too much grey Edinburgh granite in Angus Huish's makeup and, as in Kipling's orang-outang, "too much ego in his cosmos." To Huish, human agony was symptomatic, merely a clue, and disease a puzzling problem to be grappled with ruthlessly, if necessary, but inexorably—reminding one of his pitiless predecessor, the ill-famed anatomist of Edinburgh, Dr. Knox, who paid cash on the nail for corpses and asked no questions, and was hooted out of the city to the sinister refrain:

Up the close and doon the stair,
But-and-ben wi' Burke and Hare,
Burke's the butcher, Hare's the thief.
And Knox the boy who buys the beef . . .

Angus Huish's specialty was the human brain, among the 15,000,000,000 neurons of which lie the dry, picked bones of thousands of exploratory theories that died in their tracks. Unfortunately, his did not. A masterful, scholarly man, both bold and imaginative, he always managed to get his way by a sort of didactic bullying in the style of Lord Macaulay, plus a knack he had of exciting curiosity and sometimes fierce controversy even among reticent and cautious scientfic men all over the world. He was a jurist among Doctors of Medicine; and yet it was he who was primarily responsible for what some of us suspect will yet culminate in universal calamity.

His thinking (apart from his mathematics, formulae, and statistics, which it would be difficult or well-nigh impossible for the layman to comprehend) may be understood by touching upon the highlights of his earlier scientific papers. The first, in the early 1920's, innocently reported on the reactions upon bean-plants of human poisons – which, in effect, is Phytopharmacology as it is known today. Further Huish reports on his findings received confirmation from outstanding scientists: Dr. Banerji of Calcutta, for example, and Dr. Slameda

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sauers, the "Mme. Curie of Neurology." To sum it up, he had noticed and proved that young lupines, flourishing on healthy human blood in dilution, would be stunted and eventually killed by the poison—or toxin—in a 1/100 solution, of a true psychotic's blood (for "psychotic" read the incurably mentally deranged).

And what he proposed to do was search among the billions of plants in the vegetable world for suitable specimens in order, first, to induce a disease akin to human insanity; then, to cure it; and, last, to adapt this cure for Man. Thereby he would find an infallible remedy for madness.

All very fine and large, you may say, but try and sort all the plants upon the earth to choose the right ones! Also: how correlate our complex nervous system with the simple structure of a plant? Still, as Dr. Huish would argue, was even grass simple, if it could convert air and soil and sun into food upon which animals and Man himself were, in fact, hopelessly dependent?

But in the end, among the higher orders of plants, Dr. Huish hit upon a group suiting his purpose exactly: those most closely approximating flesh, and which may be said to "eat" – the sundew and the Venus's fly-trap, for example – and which also have the "intelligence" to snap at or snare their insect prey, and secrete something like human digestive juices to feed upon them.

But now Dr. Huish found himself at a biological dead-end, somewhere beyond the microscope and the microtone, in some region thinner than a centrifuge could divide – a region verging upon the spiritual. And he hated this.

Nevertheless, Dr. Huish was not out of luck – or call it "luck of the Devil," to quote the head-gardener at Forfex – for he felicitously fell upon a perfect medium for his insanity inoculations, and an imperfect place for his carnivorous plants. Grudgingly he conceded his debt to the United States researchers at the Rockefeller Foundation, M.I.T., Johns Hopkins, etcetera (whom he described as "stolid technicians," excepting only Dr. Bligh of Minnesota), for his medium. This consisted of components of uric acid, one of the causes of rheumatism, which also happens, as Dr. Huish originally suggested, to stimulate the human brain to reason, or making sense. But it was only when Dr. Bligh synthesized from a powerful derivative of uric acid, commonly known as Purine, certain significant compounds, that Dr. Huish had the basic solution, to which he added plasma for his *Purine Complex 48*.

And then that fanatical old botanist, the Earl of Forfex, died,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and his large and ancient estate in Kent went entirely to the tax-gatherers. His son, the 7th Earl, was ruined; and, the Castle with its botanical gardens being taken over by the National Trust, Dr. Huish sprang upon the hothouses like a tiger . . . in the name of Humanity.

Nobody was more pleased than the current Lord Forfex when he was put out of the cold, gloomy Castle and into the snug Keeper's Lodge. Dr. Huish made him a laboratory assistant — a handy drudge to bully and cajole and be adored by — although he irritated Huish with his persistent, monotonous voice and an aggravating coolness of manner. Moreover, he dressed like a knickerbockered professor out of a comic strip, and sucked at a pipe which had cost several pounds once upon a time but which he had neglectfully knocked and scraped into something more becoming to a tramp.

Besides the Earl of Forfex, who was a botanist like his father and a Master of Science, and the men of learning who came to the Castle from all over the world (never was any scientist more fortunate in his assistants), Dr. Huish had as head-gardener the slum-bred Jack Hopkins, a Cockney destined like *his* father to be a postman, but who had something about him which plants appeared to understand. So, in London's northern latitude he grew tropical orchids and pineapples for one of the Rothschilds; made a showplace of a cinema star's roof-garden, soot-intoxicated and wind-swept above the polluted River Thames; and in the leaky glasshouses at Forfex reproduced under glass the conditions of the marshes, from the equatorial jungle to the subarctic tundra, that beget carnivorous plants.

Even the countrymen around Forfex had to admit that the "townee" — as they called Jack Hopkins — had "the touch." He was the only man with whom Dr. Angus Huish chose not to argue. So when Jack Hopkins growled, "Ill weeds always thrive," Huish nodded and said, "Jack puts it in a nutshell. . . ."

But somebody picked on that phrase, "ill weeds" — referring to the human variety because Huish was a brain specialist — and in one of the lesser Medical Journals there was a paper on the preternatural strength of madmen in relation to the terrible power of survival of savage herbs. To which, Jack Hopkins indifferently said:

"Savage 'erbs? Why, Gawd save the Queen, sir, would you call a lamb savage because it took a snack off of a bit o' clover? Or your mother savage because she took 'er dinner off of a lamb chop? Well, then —"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dr. Huish said, "... leave mothers out of this, and concentrate on pitcher-plants, sundew and Venus's fly-trap."

"So I do, sir, but it's kind o' funny. Might I ask what that stuff is we been feeding 'em? A little tubeful a day, you know? It's not for the likes of me to ask the likes of you what you're a-doing of—"

"Bluidy right it's not. Mind your business."

"So I will, sir, but it's funny, that's all."

"Oh?" said Dr. Huish, with a kind of lowering glee. "Funny again, is it? Out with it!"

Now Lord Forfex interposed in his soft, authoritative way, "Mr. Hopkins, the solution is a secret. But let us have your observations, if you please."

"Thanks, m'lord, for talking civil. And I'll try to explain, if I can. You know, your lordship, the sundew is a slow-moving plant and eats meat. But so do you, and me too; I had stew for my dinner, and very nice too. Meat is good for plants. There's nothing richer than graveyard soil, I'm told. But as a gentleman you don't guzzle, you mind your manners and don't gollop..." He paused to light a pipeful of that spoiled shag which is used to fumigate greenhouses, the stuff known in the 18th Century as "mundungus."

"The point, come to the point!" shouted Dr. Huish hoarsely.

But Jack Hopkins was not to be hurried. He said, "Well, the sundew likes carrion, sir. But so do ladies and gentlemen turn up their noses at a fresh pheasant, or a bit o' venison or mutton not properly hung for weeks. Also, the sundew gives out a perfume what attracts flies which it eats. And so do ladies and gentlemen, only they buy it in little bottles, and they eat maggots in Stilton cheese..."

Dr. Huish made a characteristic gesture of impatience, folding and unfolding his arms and legs and ruffling what was left of his hair. "I see you're getting a bit impatient, sir," Jack Hopkins continued. "But I'm getting to my point. One of them there sundews bit my Nellie—"

"Hopkins, if you carry on like this, I'll have you certified, damn me if I don't!" Dr. Huish roared.

"Hold hard, Huish, if you please!" said Lord Forfex. "Mr. Hopkins, Nellie is your dog, I believe; and the sundew *bit* her, you say?"

"In a manner of speaking, m'lord. This 'ere sundew, your lordship, what don't like fresh meat and moves slower than the hour-hands of a clock, suddenly reaches out, quick as a snake, and fastens itself to Nellie's nose. Drew blood, too. Now, my Nellie which I raise from a pup for twelve years, will pin a rat or a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cat or even a man — anything as walks on legs what comes nigh summat as grows—but she wouldn't go near a flower. My opinion is, sir, that this 'ere sundew has took to secreting summat attractive to dogs —".

Dr. Huish called upon the Devil, whose existence he doubted, to take him if he could make head or tail of Hopkins' cockney jargon; whereupon the gardener touched his forelock, having respect for the mysteries of life, and retorted, "Best not invite Old Nick too soon!"

Then he turned to Lord Forfex. "What's more, this Venus's flytrap 'ere generally got no perfume a human can appreciate. But last night, m'lord, one of ours give out a pretty smell and I bend down to sniff. Went for me, and well-nigh got me too with them needley little teeth o' hers. No, m'lord, this ain't in nature. And now my Nellie's acting up queer, and running a fever.... Yes, Doctor, you can say 'Oho,' and all that; but our sundew has poisoned my Nellie and it's not poppycock! A man can't help liking his little bit of a dog —"

"And when was it you said the sundew attacked your dog?" asked Huish. "You're sure it didn't bite you?"

"Sir, you'd be hard put to it to get a pen-knife through the skin o' my hand, let alone a tendril. Nellie got bit two days ago."

"Hum. Well, Hopkins, we want a blood-specimen out of this dog of yours."

"Sir," said Hopkins, "anybody puts a needle in my Nellie will, I'm sorry to say, do so acrost a shotgun!"

Dr. Huish shouted, "Strike me blind, but if I don't get a blood sample, I'll have the cur chloroformed for rabies!"

"Calm, Dr. Huish, calm," said Lord Forfex, "Are there no guinea-pigs? No rats? . . . My dear Hopkins, all Dr. Huish wants of your little dog is to take a few drops of bad blood away, not to put bad blood in. And furthermore, your Nellie may become quite a heroine, with statues erected to her. Consider Banting —"

"Ay, would you rather have a dog, or diabetes?" Dr. Huish growled.

"Oh, do be quiet!" cried Lord Forfex.

"It ain't only Nellie I'm so worried about," said Hopkins, "it's the plants — they ain't *right*... Well, take a bit o' blood out o' Nellie, if that'll do good, only let me 'old the old girl down with leather gloves because she snapped at *me* this morning...."

Jack Hopkins' Nellie was one of those dogs they call "lurchers," which survive, where your thoroughbreds whose brains have been wished away for the sake

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of shape cannot, by blatant sunning; sly, soft-mouthed, ingratiating crossbreeds curiously close to the mightiest mongrel of them all, Man. She was calm and smiling — as dogs smile — while she lay at her master's feet in his little sitting-room, and wagged her tail at the approach of Dr. Huish, and of Lord Forfex, whose heavy leather gloves did not disturb her in the least.

But when Jack Hopkins put out his hands to stroke her, saying, "Ah, there now, that's a good girl for you —" she slashed at him upwards and sideways, and might have got her teeth home only he was too quick for her. After that, as if nothing had happened, she rolled over on her back, offering her stomach to be scratched.

Then Hopkins, with tears on his cheeks, said, "Oh Lord, I can tell that sideways look in a dog's eyes. She's got to be dead, I'm afraid ... Lord Forfex, m'lord, could I have the loand of your .12 bore, and a couple of number-6 cartridges?"

Dr. Huish said, "First of all, Mr. Hopkins, let us have the dog's blood-sample. And rather than a dog spoilt with a barrel or two of shot, be reasonable, man, and let me do it with barbiturates in sugared milk, and then a whiff of chloroform?"

"Her blood what I promised," said Hopkins, "I stand by. As for the rest, sir, Nellie was *my* dog, and I won't have her 'put to sleep,' as they say." Unintentionally, in his grief he made something like a witticism. "She has got to be shot to put me out of her misery."

"But I want that dog's brain! Hopkins, I'll give you a five-pound note for it. Or, blast my soul, I'll have the dog confiscated in the public interest! Now, all I need are a few drops of blood and spinal fluid out of the poor beastie," said Dr. Huish.

The test-samples being taken — and Nellie accepted the situation with a certain sidelong suavity — Dr. Huish went out, quite pleased.

Lord Forfex lingered for as long as it took to say, "Oh, Hopkins, over the fireplace in the Lodge, you'll see three or four guns. Be so kind as to clean them for me. And in the right-hand drawer of my desk, you may notice a few boxes of cartridges — but they needn't concern you."

"Thank you, m'lord, I appreciate it."

Outside the gardener's cottage, Lord Forfex said in the ruminative way of his that displeased Dr. Huish, "I take it we have been feeding *those* wretched plants — the sundew and the flytrap, and the others — Purine Complex 48, *plus* 2663141? With all respect, Dr. Huish, I don't like it. Hopkins' little terrier was too well trained to nose into a flower,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

or slash her master. Something deucedly odd here . . . Wait a second, the genesis of that 2663141 Complex! — what was it?"

"As clean a case as ever I took a blood-test from; stark raving mad, that boy." Dr. Huish rubbed his hands. "A complete psychotic. Sixteen proven murders in three years, each one a little different. A silk stocking today, scissors tomorrow, a wee lead pipe the day after; and later an electric heater in a girl's bathtub, etcetera. *Non compos mentis*, Forfex. The mediaevalists would have said that young Matthew Taylor was 'possessed,' they would."

"Did you say *Matthew Taylor*?" cried Lord Forfex, whereupon Dr. Huish nodded, grinning with a sort of unholy relish. "Sir," Lord Forfex went on, "I have read a little psychology and observed a little more, and I believe that Matthew Taylor was in his right mind *only while committing his crimes!* His normal state, since he was born mad, is mania; so that your Matthew Taylor is amenable and even charming only while devising or committing some atrocity. It is whenever any civilized instincts come into his consciousness that he foams at the mouth! Huish, you took his blood samples when he was calm enough to hold, of course. That means to say, when Taylor was at his most homicidal. And we fed the 1/100 solution of his blood to the sundew and those other plants?"

Dr. Huish said sardonically, "I took the liberty, being in charge here, of neglecting to ask Your Lordship's august permission, and dispensed a solution of 3/100."

"Then I submit, Dr. Huish, that you were too daring. These greenhouses and hothouses have been in need of repair — draughty, leaky, boldly patched — for years since my father died. Insects and vermin get in, and what gets in generally gets out, leaving some wreckage behind and carrying some ruin with it. Consider myxamytosis, so innocently started by a biologist in France, and the ensuing catastrophe to hares and rabbits of several continents . . . Hopkins tells me the rats have been at the mushrooms here. You *must* have regard for the consequences, sir!"

"Oh, stop talking like a confounded clock! And what the devil are you prattling about these hothouses for?"

Quite unperturbed by Huish's tone, Lord Forfex replied in his peculiarly metronomic voice, "Because I maintain that any experiment so dangerous and delicate as yours should be conducted in sealed laboratories, as if every greenhouse were an isolation-ward for smallpox! Moreover, in designing 2663141 Complex to induce mental disease in plants and then cure them, and so discover a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

therapy for human beings, I fear you have not counted on one terrible factor; and this is, that while one blithely assumes that a disease may be communicated by a man to a plant, one carelessly forgets that a disease may similarly be communicated by a plant to a man—"

"Oh, poppycock! If you're thinking of hay-fever, asthma, and such," said Dr. Huish, "it's all allergies—which simply means that certain proteins don't agree with certain people. Often psychosomatic; in other words, pure nerves."

"But I tell you, Huish, that we may have set in motion a very deadly epidemic! Oh please, just consider how *spirocheta pallida,* once mildly endemic among the Caribs, when given fresh hosts raged apocalyptically over the world for five hundred years! And how, through an intermediate host—malaria in the mosquito, for example—other infections become virulent. Then, draw a parallel with our savage sundews attacking a dog, and—"

"Enough of your elementary epidemiology," said Dr. Huish. "Now, referring back to smallpox: no doubt you are aware of vaccination? Man! Do you not see? I'll be the Jenner of the Higher Centers. And, damn me, but I'll make a vaccine, and introduce a Bill in Parliament, so that every child will have a jab! And mark my words; as smallpox was the scourge of the 18th Century but scarcely exists now, so shall it be with insanity—functional disorders excluded—which is the scourge of our time."

Lord Forfex said, with a sigh, "No doubt you're right. But I'm not a bit afraid of a mad man, while I should be desperately frightened of a mad vegetable. One can police the world of men, but how would you put a Bureau of Investigation, or a Commissioner in Lunacy, over the movements of the grass—"

Dr. Huish said, "I'm grateful to you, my lord, for your premonitions and admonishments. Now, will Your Lordship permit me to start a culture from this blood sample out of Hopkins' dog? Because, if the sundew has infected that snarling cur, why, that's better than I expected."

"Nellie's genealogy I have not looked into, sir. And we might not come out so well if our own ancestry were investigated," said Lord Forfex. "As to snarling, look to the beam in your own eye, Dr. Huish. . . ."

So, a little later, there was a furtive excursion—Jack Hopkins with Nellie at his heels. Under one arm he carried an inlaid shotgun made by Purdoy; over the other shoulder he carried a spade. . . . Out on the verge of the marshes, there was reverberating

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sullen thump. . . . When he returned, he went to clean Lord Forfex's guns. Soon, evening fell and as the melancholy mist of the marshes enveloped the Lodge, Dr. Huish burst in, shouting in irritation and triumph:

"Hey there, Forfex, what d'you make of this, eh?" and he held out a forefinger to which by its sharp little front teeth was suspended a very small bat, wrapped in its wings, hugging itself in a kind of ecstasy.

Jack Hopkins slapped it to the floor and stamped on it, while Dr. Huish shouted, "But I want a tissue-test of that bat, blast your eyes!"

"No sir, God knows what you let loose already," said Hopkins and shoveled up the dead bat and pushed it where the coals glowed reddest. Then he thrust his booted foot into the fire for a few seconds.

"The dog's brain!" cried Huish. "Where's that dog's brain?"

"In the marshes, sir, and so's Nellie with half a bag o' quicklime. . . . Dr. Huish, I begin to get it. The sundew and so on attracts animals like my Nellie, and drives 'em mad. Oh yes, but your sundew, your fly-trap, and your pitcher-plant, they ain't infallible — here and there is a fly or two gets away, which bats eat. . . . Oh for goodness sake, Dr. Huish, I firmly believe you been bit by the madness as got old Nellie!"

Lord Forfex said with unusual vehemence, "I subscribe to what Hopkins says, sir, and strongly recommend that, after the usual tests, you put yourself under close observation . . . Pardon me, Doctor, but you're not looking well."

"Suddenly a splitting headache, from working with the likes of you, or maybe a cold from the marshes," said Dr. Huish. But he was almost jocular when Lord Forfex brought him a hot whisky toddy and some aspirin. "The toddy, yes; but it'll be codeine for a head like this, not a weak analgesic —" He sucked his finger where the bat had bitten it, and emptied the steaming tumbler. "A migraine . . . a common migraine."

He even nodded politely to Lord Forfex's suggestion that he go to bed and have Dr. Maverick, a researcher from Boston who was another assistant of Huish's, sit with him.

"I had thought of injecting myself when the time was ripe. Forfex —" Huish rubbed his hands and chuckled "— but ah well, it's been done for me. Never mind the dog's brain. Who knows? When I need one, I might go and bite a dog myself, eh? Tell Maverick to take a blood sample and a tap of my spinal fluid; and if I get difficult, put me in a straitjacket; but so long as I am *compos mentis* I'll describe my symp-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

toms in proper scientific terms, so he better bring his notebook. It is highly interesting, this development. Goodnight."

He went out and Jack Hopkins, 'taking a liberty' for the first time in his life, said, "Begging your pardon, m'lord, could I have a drop o' that whisky? Somehow or other, my blood runs cold."

"Please, Hopkins, and pour me some too. My hand is not altogether steady." After he took a stiff dose, Forfex said, "Colonel Brumfit's horses who graze in the Lower Meadow beyond the greenhouses, used to be tractable hunters. But now they *bite!* They have gone insane, Hopkins. Another thing! The Colonel says that foxes now advance *towards* the dog, and *slash!* 'After that,' he says, 'shoot your hounds for rabies!' What do you know about that?"

"Oh yes, m'lord, I heard. But until Nellie got bit I didn't connect them things with the poison put into the poor plants. But it's catching, sir! I mean to say, whoever seen a rose bend deliberate acrost a path to scratch a man, like it done Joe Harvey — what went for 'is sister with a slashhook? And a hive o' bees turned on Fidler the honey man, and what does he do? Brains his mother, what adored him, with an eight-day clock. And where rats and mice used to hide, now they come out fighting; and what they bite goes queer," said Hopkins. ". . . M'Lord, do our greenhouses belong to you, or the nation?"

"Now, Hopkins, everybody knows that I no longer own even a blade of grass at Forfex — but I *do* feel the Lower Meadow ought to be burnt over."

Jack Hopkins touched his forelock. "No offense, m'lord, but *you* better not . . . As I reckon, the wind this evening will blow up brisk, straight out to sea. And I ought to look to my hothouse stoves and lamps, and maybe take a little hay to stuff up one or two chinks. I'll enter it in the Book, of course —" He sucked at a cold pipe, and slapped his pockets. "Could your lordship spare a few extra matches?"

"Certainly, Hopkins. Want any help?"

"I'd as lief do it my own way, m'lord, thanking you. And if you'll excuse the liberty, you might take a nice stiff walk to The Forfex Arms. Your lordship do look a bit peaky, and the air'll do you good. And if you wish, I'll carry a message to Dr. Maverick about sitting up with the sick 'un."

"Thank you, Hopkins, you always seem to know best," said Lord Forfex, with a sigh. . . .

Two hours later Lord Forfex, having walked six miles, sat in the bar of The Forfex Arms with a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pint of old ale and some bread-and-cheese. The proprietor of the old pub, of which Forfex's ancestors had been landlords, once was Head Porter up at the Castle.

Soon, one of the old gamekeepers (who, in 1940 had bought house property and got rich) said, "That's a funny sunset!"

Whereupon the publican exploded, "Funny? Why, Joe Madsen, when the sun sets in the south, call for anything you like and I'll pay for it! . . . Sunset be damned! Forfex is afire!"

"What's this!" Lord Forfex leapt up. "Where's my stick?"

An odd-job man (who, in the old days, would clean your drains for sixpence) said, "Oy'll give 'ee a lift in moy new motorcar, m'lud. Times 'ave changed, 'aven't they, eh? It's the gentleman walks and t'other roydes in 'is carriage naow."

The host of The Forfex Arms said, "Get along now with his lordship, Bottom, or I'll flat your jaw with a bung-starter!"

Apparently unruffled, Lord Forfex put some money on the bar, and left with Bottom. "There's your real gentleman all over," said the proprietor. "No sir, that's not one to be shook —" He peered at the reddening sky. "It'll be the greenhouses, surely. That townee, I reckon, overdone it with the lamps."

"Oi delivered 'em," said an ex-coalheaver, "foive 'undred gallons of oil last Tuesday, so it'll be a bonfire like Bloody Mary, loike." And so it was.

The heat sucked in the north wind and the houses of glass became incandescent and melted, and by morning the Botanical Gardens of Forfex were a charred and blasted wilderness bestrewn with curiously-shaped lumps of melted glass and metal. Dr. Huish slept through it all, under strong sedatives.

And the next afternoon Jack Hopkins, nursing a burnt hand, told Lord Forfex he had entered in the Book: "To Lamps, 700 gallons oil; To stuffing chinks, 5 bales Hay," underscoring his signature, *J. Hopkins.*

"And thank you," he added, "for walking over to The Forfex Arms, m'lord, because you know how these country people talk? Well, *I* overdone the lamps. It could be your whisky went to my head and I tipped over a twenty-gallon drum of oil, one place or another, and the hay —"

"Tipped over seven hundred gallons of oil, accidentally, upon five bales of hay inadvertently scattered? Hopkins, you're a bluidy liar!" shouted a familiar voice, and there stood Dr. Angus Huish, bettle-browed and cantankerous, himself again. "Ay, and Forfex connived with you —"

Jack Hopkins thrust out his chin. "No sir, *I* burnt down them

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

greenhouses and meadows alone, and will plead guilty to arson. I'll get six months, and cheap at the price! 'Ill weeds thrive,' they say, but nothing is ill in its proper place. Balance of Nature, sir, and upset it at your peril. And you've upset it, Dr. Huish, *at the peril of all the world!*"

"Oh, don't flatter yourself I'll make a martyr of you in court," said Huish. "Ye ignoramus, had ye not realized the ocean has more vegetables than fish? That all life on earth depends on the plankton? Damn your eyes, the spores and seeds of Forfex will be fifty miles out to sea from this. Ay, look for a Red Tide! Which reminds me, I'll take those Russian assistants of mine to Plymouth for plankton samples . . ."

Here, the record of Dr. Angus Huish ends, somewhat abruptly in rumors; but it is known that the Government is now conducting certain secret experiments in hermetically sealed greenhouses; that sheep went mad on Sussex Downs; and that Scotland Yard has been concerned with multiple murders in The Marshes. Dr. Huish, it is hinted, may be in a "sanitorium" where, in his lucid intervals, he traces graphs, correlating the flow of ocean plankton with European and American outbreaks of bloody violence and particularly of juvenile delinquency.

These might be merely signs of the times, rather than what Dr. Huish suggests in the report, smuggled out to one of his former assistants, which I quoted at the beginning of this account. After all, he is not mentally competent. Otherwise, why did he murderously attack with a paper-knife a respected member of the British Medical Association who was addressing the World Health Organization?

This much I know to be true: Huish's assistants from an alien aggressive state — the doctors Shimkinski and Soloveychik, and Professor Ivan Thal — who accompanied Huish to Plymouth, have disappeared. Bloodlessly but completely. Make what you like of this.

We trust that all these are matters of coincidence which those who are now observing the effect of bad human blood upon vegetables may soon resolve.

As Dr. Huish said, "We live in hopes . . ."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Unfortunately

by FREDRIC BROWN

RALPH NC-5 SIGHED WITH RELIEF as he caught sight of Planet Four of Arcturus in the spotter scope, just where his computer had told him it would be. Arcturus IV was the only inhabited or inhabitable planet of its primary and it was quite a few light-years to the next star system.

He needed food—his fuel and water supplies were okay but the commissary department on Pluto had made a mistake in stocking his scouter—and, according to the spacemanual, the natives were friendly. They'd give him anything he asked for.

The manual was very specific on that point; he reread the brief section on the Arcturians as soon as he had set the controls for automatic landing.

"The Arcturians," he read, "are inhuman, but very friendly. A pilot landing here need only ask for what he wants, and it is given to him freely, readily, and without argument.

"Communication with them, however, must be by paper and pencil as they have no vocal organs and no organs of hearing. However, they read and write English with considerable fluency."

Ralph NC-5's mouth watered as he tried to decide what he wanted to eat first, after two days of complete abstinence from food, preceded by five days of short rations; a week ago he had discovered the commissary department's mistake in stocking his lockers.

Foods, wonderful foods, chased one another through his mind.

He landed, The Arcturians, a dozen of them and they were indeed inhuman—twelve feet tall, six-armed, bright magenta—approached him and their leader bowed and handed him paper and pencil.

Suddenly he knew exactly what he wanted; he wrote rapidly and handed back the pad. It passed from hand to hand among them.

Then abruptly he found himself grabbed, his arms pinioned. And then tied to a stake around which they were piling brushwood and sticks. One of them lighted it.

He screamed protests but they fell, not on deaf ears but on no ears at all. He screamed pain, and then stopped screaming.

The spacemanual had been quite correct in saying that the Arcturians read and write English with considerable fluency. But it had omitted to add that they were very poor at spelling; else the *last* thing Ralph NC-5 would have requested would have been a sizzling steak.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Recommended Reading:

An All Star Survey

by ANTHONY BOUCHER

THIS COLUMN BEGAN, SOME NINE years ago, around the same time that general trade publishers started to take notice of science fiction. In its nine annual surveys, it has listed almost 250 books as "bests" of their respective years, approximately half of them s.f. (The other half has included fantasy, non-fiction, bibliography, humor, verse, and the collected works of Tom Cobley *et al.*)

This is a retrospective survey on what remains vividly memorable and exciting among those science-fictional "bests"—and I'm a little surprised to find how many s.f. books pass this test. I started in with the (one would think simple) objective of preparing a list of 50 titles particularly treasured in memory: 50 Review Copies I Would Not Part With. It was by no means easy—not even after establishing ground rules which arbitrarily excluded juveniles (even by Heinlein) and anthologies (even by Merril). And anyone small-minded enough to count titles will observe that, after my most stern and honest efforts, I didn't quite succeed in paring the list down to 50.

This is not intended as an earnest, well-balanced, representative checklist of modern s.f.-in-book-form. It is, inevitably, highly personal, with extremely debatable omissions and inclusions. But these are novels and collections which have, from 1949 through 1957, given intense pleasure to a man professionally obligated to read every s.f. book published in America; and I venture the guess that any reader, novice or habitué of our field, will find stimulation and delight in a high number of these titles.

Hardcover publishers are in Roman type; paperbacks in italics; an asterisk denotes simultaneous publication in both forms. (C) marks a collection of shorts or novelets; *ab.* means an abridged version. Titles in brackets are those of earlier magazine or foreign publication.

★ANDERSON, POUL

BRAIN WAVE *[THE ESCAPE]* (*Ballantine*, 1954)

★ASIMOV, ISAAC

I, ROBOT (C) (Gnome, 1950; *Signet*, 1956)

THE CAVES OF STEEL (Doubleday, 1954; *Signet*, 1955)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NAKED SUN (Doubleday, 1957; *Bantam*, 1958)

EARTH IS ROOM ENOUGH (C) (Doubleday, 1957)

★BESTER, ALFRED

THE DEMOLISHED MAN (Shasta, 1953; *Signet*, 1954)

THE STARS MY DESTINATION *[TIGER, TIGER!]* (*Signet*, 1957)

★BRACKETT, LEIGH

THE LONG TOMORROW (Doubleday, 1955)

★BRADBURY, RAY

THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES (Doubleday, 1950; *Bantam*, 1951; Doubleday, 1958) *[In case that seems an odd listing: the 1958 hardcover is a new edition with a provocative introduction by Clifton Fadiman.]*

★BROWN, FREDRIC

WHAT MAD UNIVERSE (Dutton, 1949; *Bantam*, 1954)

THE LIGHTS IN THE SKY ARE STARS (Dutton, 1953; *Bantam*, 1955)

ANGELS AND SPACESHIPS (C) (Dutton, 1954; *Bantam*, 1956, as STAR SHINE)

★CAMPBELL, JOHN W., JR.

CLOAK OF AESIR (C) (Shasta, 1952)

★CHRISTOPHER, JOHN

NO BLADE OF GRASS *[THE DEATH OF GRASS]* (Simon & Schuster, 1957; *Pocket Books*, 1958)

★CLARKE, ARTHUR C.

PRELUDE TO SPACE (*Galaxy*, 1951; Gnome-*Ballantine*, 1954)

EXPEDITION TO EARTH (C) (*Ballantine, 1953)

AGAINST THE FALL OF NIGHT (Gnome, 1953; *Permabooks*, 1954), as well as the greatly expanded and intensified form of the same story: THE CITY AND THE STARS (Harcourt, Brace, 1956; *Signet*, 1957)

★CLEMENT, HAL

MISSION OF GRAVITY (Doubleday, 1954)

★DE CAMP, L. SPRAGUE

THE WHEELS OF IF (C) (Shasta, 1949)

ROGUE QUEEN (Doubleday, 1951; *Dell*, 1952)

★DEL REY, LESTER

NERVES (*Ballantine, 1956)

★DICK, PHILIP K.

EYE IN THE SKY (*Ace*, 1957)

★FINNEY, JACK

THE THIRD LEVEL (C) (Rinehart, 1957)

★HEINLEIN, ROBERT A.

THE MAN WHO SOLD THE MOON (C) (Shasta, 1950; *ab. Signet*, 1951)

THE GREEN HILLS OF EARTH (C) (Shasta, 1951; *Signet*, 1952, 1958)

★JAMESON, MALCOLM

BULLARD OF THE SPACE PATROL (World, 1951)

★KORNBLUTH, C. M.

TAKEOFF (Doubleday, 1952; *Pennant*, 1953)

THE EXPLORERS (C) (*Ballantine*, 1954)

NOT THIS AUGUST (Doubleday, 1955; *Bantam*, 1956)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

★LEIBER, FRITZ
GATHER, DARKNESS! (Pellegrini & Cudahy, 1950)
THE GREEN MILLENNIUM (Abelard, 1953; *Lion*, 1954)

★MEAD, SHEPHERD
THE BIG BALL OF WAX (Simon & Schuster, 1954; *Ballantine*, 1956)

★MERRIL, JUDITH
SHADOW ON THE HEARTH (Doubleday, 1950)

★OLIVER, CHAD
SHADOWS IN THE SUN (*Ballantine, 1954)
ANOTHER KIND (C) (*Ballantine, 1955)

★PANGBORN, EDGAR
A MIRROR FOR OBSERVERS (Doubleday, 1954)

★POHL, FREDERIK, & KORNBLUTH, C. M.
THE SPACE MERCHANTS [GRAVY PLANET] (*Ballantine, 1953)

★PRIESTLEY, J. B.
THE OTHER PLACE (C) (Harper, 1955)

★RUSSELL, ERIC FRANK
DEEP SPACE (C) (Fantasy Press, 1954; *ab. Bantam*, 1955)

★SHECKLEY, ROBERT
UNTOUCHED BY HUMAN HANDS (C) (*Ballantine, 1954)

★SIMAK, CLIFFORD D.
CITY (C) (Gnome, 1952; *Permabooks*, 1954; *Ace*, 1958)
STRANGERS IN THE UNIVERSE (Simon & Schuster, 1956; *ab. Berkley*, 1957)

★STURGEON, THEODORE
WITHOUT SORCERY (C) (Prime, 1949)
THE DREAMING JEWELS (Greenberg, 1950; *Pyramid*, 1957, as THE SYNTHETIC MAN)
MORE THAN HUMAN (Farrar, Straus & Young-*Ballantine*, 1953)

★VAN VOGT, A. E.
SLAN (Simon & Schuster, 1951; *Dell*, 1953)
THE WEAPON SHOPS OF ISHER (Greenberg, 1951; *Ace*, 1954) and with it, as really making one long novel: THE WEAPON MAKERS (Greenberg, 1952; *Ace*, 1955, as ONE AGAINST ETERNITY)

★VONNEGUT, KURT, JR.
PLAYER PIANO (Scribner's, 1952; *Bantam*, 1954, as UTOPIA 14)

★WEINBAUM, STANLEY G.
A MARTIAN ODYSSEY (C) (Fantasy Press, 1949)

★WRIGHT, S. FOWLER
THE THRONE OF SATURN [THE NEW GODS LEAD] (Arkham, 1949)

★WYNDHAM, JOHN
THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS (Doubleday, 1951; *Popular*, 1952, as REVOLT OF THE TRIFFIDS)
RE-BIRTH [THE CHRYSALIDS] (*Ballantine*, 1955)

And to these I'd like to add a half dozen books about which I can't maintain a reviewer's proper objectivity, since they originated in these pages under my (and in most cases McComas') editorship:
BRING THE JUBILEE, by Ward Moore (Farrar, Straus & Young-*Ballantine*, 1953)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TALES FROM GAVAGAN'S BAR (C), by Fletcher Pratt & L. Sprague de Camp (Twayne, 1953)

THE SINISTER RESEARCHES OF C. P. RANSOM (C), by H. Nearing, Jr. (Doubleday, 1954)

ONE IN THREE HUNDRED, by J. T. McIntosh (Doubleday, 1954; *Ace*, 1955)

THE STAR BEAST *[STAR LUMMOX]*, by Robert A. Heinlein (Scribner's, 1954)

THE DOOR INTO SUMMER, by Robert A. Heinlein (Doubleday, 1957)

My special gratitude goes out, as I look over this list, to Ballantine Books and to Doubleday & Co., for publishing such a disproportionate number of the books I've most enjoyed—and for continuing steadily to publish s.f. not only in "boom" seasons, but in bad times when the fainthearted fall by the wayside.

Memo to publishers and agents: I find myself much surprised by certain books that are not on the list—because they don't even exist. A collection of the shorter stories of Fritz Leiber, for instance, or of Ward Moore would match anything listed, both in imaginative ingenuity and in literary quality. It should be possible to compile a half dozen volumes of the short stories and novelets of the prolific but sustainedly excellent Poul Anderson. And why are there no collections by others on the list: Brackett, Christopher, Clement, Merril, Pangborn, Vonnegut? And think of the splendid books that could be complied from the fugitive pieces of Robert Abernathy, Robert Bloch, Gordon R. Dickson, Damon Knight, Walter M. Miller, Jr., William Morrison, or Idris Seabright! And particularly in the from-these-pages department, will someone please gratify the countless readers who write in begging for a book of Zenna Henderson's novelets of The People, and one of Manly Wade Wellman's stories of the ballad-singer John?*

And mention of John reminds me that the first *F* in F&SF should not be wholly neglected. For the readers (and they're not uncommon) who prefer "pure" fantasy even to s.f., here are a dozen titles newly published or significantly revived since this department began—and to tell the truth, these I have enjoyed even more deeply than the science fiction books above.

★CARR, JOHN DICKSON

THE DEVIL IN VELVET (Harper, 1951; *Bantam*, 1953)

★COLLIER, JOHN

FANCIES AND GOODNIGHTS (C) (Doubleday, 1951; *Bantam*, 1953, 1957)

**New stories in both those popular series coming up in F&SF very soon!* —R.P.M.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

★**EDDISON, E. R.**
THE WORM OUROBOROS (1926) (Dutton, 1952)

★**FINNEY, CHARLES G.**
THE CIRCUS OF DR. LAO (1935) (*Bantam*, 1956)

★**HOGG, JAMES**
THE PRIVATE MEMOIRS AND CONFESSIONS OF A JUSTIFIED SINNER (1824) (Chanticleer, 1949)

★**HUBBARD, L. RON**
FEAR (in TWO NOVELS, Gnome, 1951; alone, *Galaxy*, 1957)

★**JACKSON, SHIRLEY**
THE LOTTERY (C) (Farrar, Straus, 1949)

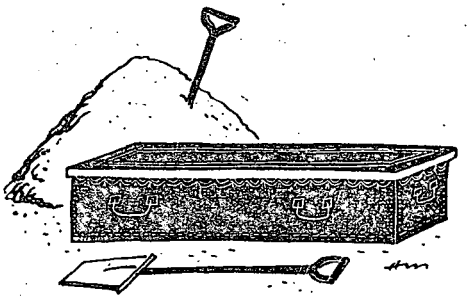
★**JAMES, HENRY**
THE GHOSTLY TALES (C) (Rutgers, 1949)

★**KELLY, WALT**
POGO (*Simon & Schuster*, 1951) and all its biennial successors

★**LEWIS, C. S.**
TILL WE HAVE FACES (Harcourt, Brace, 1957)

★**THURBER, JAMES**
FURTHER FABLES FOR OUR TIMES (C) (Simon & Schuster, 1956)

★**TOLKIEN, J. R. R.**
THE LORD OF THE RINGS (3 vol., Houghton Mifflin, 1954-1956)



WE'VE FOUND SOMETHING FINE . . .

Digging in a few forgotten, dusty corners, we've come across boxes containing hundreds of copies of first-line mysteries.

They include Bestseller Mysteries and Jonathan Press Mysteries—reprints of the best detective and crime novels of recent years—as well as a supply of Mercury Mystery Book-Magazines, which include in each issue a top-original mystery book, together with assorted fascinating short articles and stories on the always fascinating subject of crime.

We offer a full 10 assorted copies of these finds for only $1.00! Original value: $3.50. At this price, we regret that we cannot fill any special orders—you'll have to let us do the picking. But you'd better hurry—this offer is good only until we run out of copies. Send your dollar to:

FINDS—MERCURY PRESS, INC.—527 Madison Ave., N. Y. 22, N. Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ballade of an Artificial Satellite

"Thence they sailed far to the southward along the land, and came to a ness; the land lay upon the right; there were long and sandy strands. They rowed to land, and found there upon the ness the keel of a ship, and called the place Keelness, and the strands they called Wonderstrands for it took long to sail by them."
—Thorfinn Karlsefni's voyage to Vinland

One inland summer I walked through rye,
a wind at my heels that smelled of rain
and harried white clouds through a whistling sky
where the great sun stalked and shook his mane
and roared so brightly across the grain
it burned and shimmered like alien sands.—
Ten years old, I saw down a lane
the thunderous light on Wonderstrands.

In ages before the world ran dry,
what might the mapless not contain?
Atlantis gleamed like a dream to die,
Avalon lay under faerie reign,
Cíbola guarded a golden plain,
Tir-nan-Og was fair-locked Fand's
sober men saw from a gull's-road wain
the thunderous light on Wonderstrands.

Such changing countries in cloudland lie;
but men grew weary and they grew sane
and they grew grown—and so did I—
and knew Tartessus was only Spain.
No galleons call at Taprobane
(Ceylon, with English); no queenly hands
wear gold from Punt; nor sees the Dane
the thunderous light on Wonderstrands.

Ahoy, Prince Andros Horizon's-bane!
They always wait, the elven lands.
An evening planet gives again
the thunderous light on Wonderstrands.

POUL ANDERSON

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Herewith the conclusion to Robert A. Heinlein's newest novel, together with a synopsis by the author of all those fine things which have gone before. If you missed any or all of the first two parts, this synopsis, we think you'll find, is expert enough and complete enough to hurtle you into the conclusion with hardly a moment's pause to regret having missed the earlier instalments. Good reading!

Have Space Suit—Will Travel

by ROBERT A. HEINLEIN

(Third of three parts)

You see, I had this space suit—

My name is Kip Russell. I was just finishing my senior year at Centerville High School. Dear old C.H.S. isn't much of a school—it's one of those King-size kindergartens, they use for high schools these days. But my Dad is eccentric; he thinks that logarithms are more important than "Life Adjustment;" under his prodding I soaked up quite a bit of math and science anyhow, studying mostly at home. I was dead set on going into space and the way to do that is to get an engineering education.

Then Skyway Soap announced their big slogan contest, that one with the first prize an all-expense trip to the Moon.

I was just wild to win it. I sent in thousands of soap wrappers and slogans—much helped, I must add, by Dad and Mother and by Mr. Charton, my boss. I was the soda jerk at Charton's Drugs that spring, which gave me a chance to sell Skyway Soap and talk the customers out of the wrappers. The only customer I missed on was "Ace" Quiggle, Centerville's outstanding useless citizen. Ace not only would not part with a soap wrapper; he repeatedly used the excuse of a chocolate malted milk to hang around my soda fountain, discourage sales, and make fun of the whole matter with witty remarks about "Commodore Russell, the Scourge of the Space Pirates" and like nonsense.

Somehow I kept my temper, sold soap, and sent in 5,782 slogans.

But I didn't win the trip to the Moon. I won an obsolete space suit.

But, shucks, I never really thought I would win—and it was a real space suit. I spent all that summer reconditioning it, refitting it with space-band radio, making it gas tight. Space suits are wonderful pieces of machinery; they make a hotrod look simple. I got so attached to this one that it acquired a personality for me; I called him "Oscar" and used to talk with him, the way you will with a dog, supplying both sides of the chatter.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But I couldn't keep Oscar. The contest rules permitted me to turn him in as salvage, for $500—and I needed the cash for my first semester in engineering school. So the evening before the Labor Day weekend I was sadly taking a last walk with Oscar, in the pasture back of our house (pretending I was on Venus) when I heard a call for help on Oscar's space-band radio.

Then a space ship almost squashed me.

Another ship landed, two figures ran out of the first one, I lumbered after them when one of them screamed and fell. I stood over it, trying to figure out what it was (it wasn't human)—When something hit me in the spine.

I woke up locked in a room. Oscar was gone and present was an under-size, over-educated, smart-Aleck female brat. Her name was Patricia Wynant Reisfeld but she told me to call her "Peewee." According to her, she had been piloting the first space ship, was being chased by space pirates in the second; the pirates had captured us and we were now on our way to the Moon—in a flying saucer.

So I knew I was out of my head.

Unfortunately I was not. Every word of it was true. Two men, a fat one and a skinny one, hauled me in to see the boss pirate, after knocking me out with a ray that paralyzed me. One good look at my captor convinced me.

It was not just that he was ugly—although he was a bug-eyed monster so dreadful that a comic book would be ashamed to picture him . . . wormy tendrils at his mouth, four snaky arms, eyes that scanned like radar and an eye in the back of his head. But it was not his looks—

This creature was *evil.*

You hear people say that "good" and "evil" are just relative matters. They hadn't seen this thing. Old Wormface was bad all the way through. His viciousness was an overpowering force that drained the will out of me. He quizzed me, squeezed out of me all that I knew that he was interested in, had Fats and Skinny dump me back in my cell.

I was ready to believe Peewee now. She told me what little she knew. She had been on the Moon as a tourist and had been kidnapped by Fats and Skinny, who had turned her over to Wormface. Wormface and his tribe were moving in on us, with an advance base on the Moon from which they scouted Earth. To them we were just animals—slaves or (possibly) food. While captive, Peewee had met the "Mother Thing," another sort of extra-terrestrial and as different from Wormface as is possible—but just as non-human. Peewee described the Mother Thing as a "cop" who was chasing Wormface but had been captured by him—which didn't explain much, but any enemy of Wormface was a friend of mine.

Peewee and the Mother Thing had escaped in a wormface ship, with Peewee at the controls and the Mother Thing coaching her. Peewee had been headed for Princeton, New Jersey, where her father was somebody important in the Institute for Advanced Studies—when she had been forced down in Centerville . . .

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which was how my space suit and myself had got tangled in it.

All of which explained everything except how to get untangled.

The ship we were in landed on the Moon but Peewee and I were left locked up. We managed with brute force and a wad of bubble gum to get out of our cell. The ship was empty and I thought we could escape in it, since Peewee had flown one before—but no such luck; Wormface had taken with him an essential gadget (call it an "ignition key," which it wasn't).

But I cracked open a few more doors and found our space suits—"Oscar" and the tourist suit Peewee had had when she was kidnapped. We had a chance now.

Peewee found the Mother Thing, locked in another compartment. She turned out to be a cuddly little creature, no more human than a goldfish but utterly delightful. She talked in high birdlike songs which I found I could understand. Telepathy? Well, maybe—I don't know. But I did know why she was the "Mother Thing"—she made you want to crawl into her lap for comfort. She was motherly.

Two space suits and three persons. I loosened the straps on Oscar, the Mother Thing climbed on me piggyback, Peewee helped me seal up and I helped her, I took two spare bottles of oxygen-helium mix which I found in the room used by the renegade humans, Fats and Skinny, and we started out, intending simply to walk to the nearest human settlement on the Moon — Tombaugh Observatory Station, forty miles away across a ridge of mountains.

It began almost as a picnic; it wound up as an endless nightmare of heat, bone-weariness, and not enough oxygen to breath. I had a bad time—but I had drinking water, sugar pills, pep pills, all where I could reach them in Oscar's helmet. Poor little Peewee had nothing but courage and a very limited supply of oxygen; her tourist space suit had never been designed for serious work. Even its hose fittings weren't standard and my clumsy attempts to jury-rig a way to get our spare air into her bottle wasted about half.

Peewee collapsed from sheer lack of air when we had Tombaugh Station straight ahead of us; I picked her up and stumbled on. I don't know exactly what happened after that as I was sliding into the last stages of anoxia delerium myself. It seemed to me that we were in front of Tombaugh Station's pressure lock. A pressurized crawler stopped beside us and I yelled for help.

Two men got out, a fat one and a skinny one. Skinny aimed something at me—and that was the last I knew.

I woke up lashed to an acceleration couch in Wormface's ship. Skinny was slapping me and trying to force a capsule into my mouth. Fats warned me to take it, because I had five bad days ahead. I took it because I had to, and a big hypodermic shot as well. They hurriedly did the same for each other, then strapped themselves into their own couches. I was still trying to find out what had happened to Peewee and the Mother Thing when incredibly heavy acceleration hit us.

The enormous weight seemed to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

go on forever; I lived through it in a foggy nightmare, from high weight, from drugs, from fatigue.

At last they were slapping me awake and injecting a stimulant. Fats kneaded my cramped arms and legs, remarking, "Five days at eight gravities ain't no joy ride." I asked where we were. He grinned savagely. "Pluto. Lovely place—a real summer resort."

I didn't believe it—Pluto is too far away, too cold. But before I had time to think about it, I was forced into my suit, hurried along a causeway over a bed of "ice" and into a mountainside, a series of sealed caverns, a wormface base. Wormface himself was there and caused Fats and Skinny to strip me out of my suit and shove me down a hole.

I landed in a cell. It had running water but absolutely nothing else—most especially no way to get out. The hole in the ceiling through which I had been pushed was the only exit.

I had time to study it, as the only interruption in my thinking was arrival, now and then, of a can of emergency rations tossed down through the hole in the ceiling. Merlin or Superman might have escaped from the cell, but not Kip Russell. Nor Houdini.

I did have time to decide that I really was on Pluto, silly as it seemed. Five days at eight gravities worked out about right—and the really incredible *cold* outdoors, even in a short walk in an insulated space suit, was very convincing.

Some days later Fats was tossed down the hole. Skinny landed on top of him.

We lived for days in uneasy peace. Skinny ignored me. Fats was fairly sociable but I kept my distance. From Fats I learned that Peewee was alive and here—"living like a princess!" He was righteously indignant about it and felt that Wormface had treated them with ingratitude—"after all we done for him." I thought he was stupid to expect gratitude from Wormface—and I certainly did not believe the implication that Peewee had turned renegade herself.

During one "night" I was shaken awake by Fats. Skinny was missing and Fats was hysterical with terror. "They've taken him! They've come for him. One of us'll be next!"

"Huh? Why?"

"You don't *know?* Soup — that's what for. They like soup."

Sometime during the next sleep they took Fats. I never saw them again.

The following long lonely period was broken by an explosion and a sudden drop in pressure. I was still biting my nails helplessly when I heard a shrill voice: "Kip! Oh, *Kip!*"

"*Peewee!*" I yelled back.

She found a line and I climbed out. While she was trying to explain, a wormface came up behind us—and would have finished us with one of those paralyser projectors if Peewee hadn't spotted him and launched herself at him like a kitten. It gave me time to jump on him with both feet—one dead wormface, one paralyser weapon for us.

But all the wormfaces in the base were dead; the explosion had been created by the Mother Thing. She had managed, slowly, to gain access

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to their laboratories and repair shops by building things for them that the wormfaces did not know how to build but wanted. Slowly, very slowly, for she was still simply a prisoner-at-large herself, she had contrived to build two bombs and a homing beacon. Her scheme called for killing the wormfaces and placing the beacon out doors, all at a particular time—when no ship was in, when the wormfaces were feeding, when Pluto was faced in a particular direction during the Plutonian night.

It had all worked out . . . save that the Mother Thing's space suit had long since been destroyed and Peewee's suit had either been destroyed or hidden so thoroughly that they could not locate it. The Mother Thing decided to attempt to place the beacon without the protection of a suit. "Where is she now?" I asked. Peewee burst into tears. "Oh, Kip, she's dead!"

She had tried it and had not come back. In view of the near-absolute-zero temperature outside I thought Peewee must be right; if the Mother Thing had gone outside without protection, she was dead.

But she had wanted that beacon placed whether she lived or not—and by a certain time. "Hurry, Kip! We've got to *hurry!*"

Peewee knew where my suit was stored and with it were other suits for humans—all much too big for Peewee. She helped me suit up, told me what the beacon looked like, where I was to place it on the causeway outside, and how to trigger it. Then I went out through the air lock.

I found the Mother Thing, frozen stiff as an icicle and much, much colder, at the mouth of the tunnel into the mountain. I took the beacon from her frozen fingers and started out the causeway into the black Plutonian night. The cold was indescribable but I had only a hundred yards to go.

A hundred yards out and a hundred yards back—and forty miles on the Moon turned out to be easier. I was so cold by the time I got out to the spot that I could no longer feel anything. I managed to place the beacon and trigger it—and a flash of light from it dazzled my eyes.

I crawled back, with my hands and feet chunks of ice, guided by the edge of the causeway, in danger of being swept off by wind. I made it as far as the frozen form of the Mother Thing and collapsed. I was far out of my mind by then, for both she and Oscar seemed to be telling me that everything was all right.

Somehow Peewee dragged me inside—she had found her suit at last . . . hidden inside Fats' much larger one. She sat me down inside and presently I really began to hurt as I thawed. But there was nothing to do but wait to die. Even if the beacon worked, the Mother Thing's home planet couldn't be nearer than Proxima Centauri . . . and we had about four hours of air left. There wasn't any hope and our efforts had all been wasted. No sense in worrying Peewee about it and no point in trying to do anything about my frozen arms and legs.

The air lock started to open. I yelled at Peewee to have the paralyzer ready, for I was sure another wormface ship had landed. I was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

angry—I wanted to die in peace.

It was the Mother Thing's people. They took us to Vega Five, twenty-seven light-years away.

I didn't see much of Vega Five because I spent the time getting well. I was mounted in a mass of machinery bearing about the relation to an iron lung that an iron lung does to a Boy Scout's splint; the Vegans were regenerating my ruined arms and legs in a fashion far beyond human medicine. But I wasn't lonely — Peewee was around and so was the Mother Thing. (She seemed a bit shocked that I had thought that a mere freezing could kill her.)

The Vegans were as far ahead of us as we are ahead of Australian Bushmen. But they were interested in us just the same; I spent much of my bedfast convalescence recording, first, everything that I knew about the wormfaces, and then, *everything—everything*—that I knew about human culture and history. A Vegan I called "Prof Joe" helped me.

Eventually I was well and allowed out of my room (it was an unreasonable facsimile of my room at home—part of their therapy). Peewee took me for a walk and I got a glimpse of the Vegan city we were in—but only a glance, as the Mother Thing arrived home, looked me over, and announced, "We leave at once."

I said, "Huh? Where?" Peewee looked upset.

I questioned Peewee about it as we went back to our rooms to get our belongings. It seemed that we had to testify at some sort of hearing or trial of Wormface — or the wormfaces. I didn't mind; it would give me a chance to see more of Vegan life than I had been able to while getting well. "Where, Peewee? This city?" I hoped it would be elsewhere—more travel.

"No, no, not even this planet."

"I thought this was the only inhabitable—"

"Not this system. Not even this Galaxy."

"*What?*"

"We have to be taken to a place in the Lesser Magellanic Cloud."

That really startled me. I had accepted the idea that the Vegans weren't limited by the speed of light —after all, here we were, twenty-seven light-years from home. But to go clear outside the Galaxy—the distances were incredible.

But Peewee looked white and worried . . . which wasn't like her. I said slowly, "Come clean, kid. What's eating you?"

She didn't answer. I insisted, "Spit it out. When do they let us go home?"

"I don't know!"

"What do you mean?"

"Kip . . . oh, Kip, I'm sorry—" She was starting to cry. "—I didn't mean to hold out on you . . . but you were ill. You see—well, it's not just Wormface. *We* have to be tried, too!"

I was stunned. "For what? What have *we* done?"

"I don't *know*, I tell you. The Mother Thing won't talk about it!"

I felt sick. I thought bitterly about the weary, broiling miles I had trudged on the Moon, carrying the Mother Thing on my back rather than abandon her — about crawling through the hellish cold of the Plutonic night to set her beacon. A

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sweet place, Vega Five—The Natives Are Friendly. Gratitude—

Peewee was bawling openly now. She put a hand on my arm. "But, Kip, I *told* you she was a cop."

"You think that excuses it?"

X

I didn't put up a fight—a hundred and sixty trillion miles from nowhere, I mean. But I didn't speak to the Mother Thing as I got into her ship.

It was shaped like an old-fashioned beehive and it looked barely big enough to jump us to the spaceport. Peewee and I crowded together on the floor, the Mother Thing curled up in front and twiddled a shiny rack like an abacus; we took off, straight up.

In a few minutes my anger grew from sullenness to a reckless need to settle it. "Mother Thing!"

[*"One moment, dear. Let me get us out of atmosphere."*] She pushed something, the ship quivered and steadied.

"Mother Thing," I repeated.

[*"Wait until I lower us, Kip."*]

I had to wait. It's as silly to disturb a pilot as it is to snatch the wheel of a car. The little ship took a buffeting; the upper winds must have been dillies. But she could pilot.

Presently there was a gentle bump and I figured we must be at the spaceport. The Mother Thing turned her head. [*"All right, Kip. I sense your fear and resentment. Will it help to say that you two are in no danger? That I would protect you with my body? As you protected mine?"*]

"Yes, but—"

[*"Then let be. It is easier to show than it is to explain. Don't clamp your helmet. This planet's air is like your own."*]

"Huh? You mean we're *there?*"

"I told you," Peewee said at my elbow. "Just *poof!* and you're there."

I didn't answer. I was trying to guess how far we were from home.

[*"Come, children."*] It was midday when we left; it was night as we disembarked. The ship rested on a platform that stretched out of sight. Stars in front of me were in unfamiliar constellations; slaunchwise down the sky was a thin curdling which I spotted as the Milky Way. So Peewee had her wires crossed—we were far from home but still in the Galaxy—perhaps we had simply switched to the night side of Vega IV.

I heard Peewee gasp and turned around.

I didn't have strength to gasp.

Dominating that whole side of the sky was a great whirlpool of millions, maybe billions, of stars.

You've seen pictures of the Great Nebula in Andromeda?—a giant spiral of two curving arms, seen at an angle. Of all the lovely

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

things in the sky it is the most beautiful. This was like that.

Only we weren't seeing a photograph nor even by telescope; we were so close (if "close" is the word) that it stretched across the sky twice as long as the Big Dipper as seen from home—so close that I saw the thickening at the center, two great branches coiling around and overtaking each other. We saw it from an angle so that it appeared elliptical, just as M31 in Andromeda does; you could feel its depth, you could see its shape.

Then I *knew* I was a long way from home. *That* was home, up there, lost in billions of crowded stars.

It was some time before I noticed another double spiral on my right, almost as wide-flung but rather lopsided and not nearly as brilliant—a pale ghost of our own gorgeous Galaxy. It slowly penetrated that this second one must be the Greater Magellanic Cloud —if we were in the Lesser and if that fiery whirlpool was our own Galaxy. What I had thought was The Milky Way was simply *a* milky way, the Lesser Cloud from inside.

I turned and looked at it again. It had the right shape, a roadway around the sky, but it was pale skim-milk compared with our own, about as our Milky Way looks on a murky night. I didn't know how it should look, since I'd never seen the Magellanic Clouds; I've never been south of the Rio Grande. But I did know that each cloud is a galaxy in its own right, but smaller than ours and grouped with us.

I looked again at our blazing spiral and was homesick in a way I hadn't been since I was six.

Peewee was huddling to the Mother Thing for comfort. She made herself taller and put an arm around Peewee. [*"There, there, dear! I felt the same way when I was very young and saw it for the first time."*]

"Mother Thing?" Peewee said timidly. "Where is *home*?"

[*"See the right half of it, dear, where the outer arm trails into nothingness? We came from a point two-thirds the way out from the center."*]

"No, no! Not Vega. I want to know where the Sun is!"

[*"Oh, your star. But, dear, at this distance it is the same."*]

We learned how far it is from the Sun to the planet Lanador—167,000 light-years. The Mother Thing couldn't tell us directly as she did not know how much time we meant by a "year"—how long it takes Terra to go around the Sun (a figure she might have used once or not at all and as worth remembering as the price of peanuts in Perth). But she did know the distance from Vega to the Sun and told us the distance from

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lanador to Vega with that as a yardstick: six thousand one hundred and ninety times as great. 6190 times 27 light-years gives 167,000 light-years. She courteously gave it in powers of ten the way we figure, instead of using factorial five (1 x 2 x 3 x 4 x 5 equals 120) which is how Vegans figure. 167,000 light-years is 9.82 $x10^{17}$ miles. Round off 9.82 and call it ten. Then—

1,000,000,000,000,000,000 miles

—is the distance from Vega to Lanador (or from the Sun to Lanador; Vega and the Sun are back fence neighbors on this scale.)

A thousand million billion miles.

I refuse to have anything to do with such a preposterous figure. It may be "short" as cosmic distances go, but there comes a time when the circuit breakers in your skull trip out from overload.

The platform we were on was the roof of an enormous triangular building, miles on a side. We saw that triangle repeated in many places and always with a two-armed spiral in each corner. It was the design the Mother Thing wore as jewelry.

It is the symbol for "Three Galaxies, One Law."

I'll lump here things I learned in driblets: The Three Galaxies are like our Federated Free Nations, or the United Nations before that, or the League of Nations still earlier; Lanador houses their offices and courts and files—the League's Capital, the way the FFN is in New York and the League of Nations used to be in Switzerland. The cause is historical: the people of Lanador are the Old Race; that's where civilization began.

The Three Galaxies are an island group, like Hawaii State, they haven't any other close neighbors. Civilization spread through the Lesser Cloud, then through the Greater Cloud and is seeping slowly through our own Galaxy—that is taking longer; there are fifteen or twenty times as many stars in our Galaxy as in the other two.

When I began to get these things straight I wasn't quite as sore. The Mother Thing was a very important person at home but here she was a minor official—all she could do was bring us in. Still, I wasn't more than coolly polite for a while—she might have looked the other way while we beat it for home.

They housed us in that enormous building in a part you could call a "transients' hotel," although "detention barracks" or "jail" is closer. I can't complain about accommodations but I was getting confoundedly tired of being locked up every time I arrived in a new place. A robot met us and took us down inside—there are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

robots wherever you turn on Lanador. I don't mean things looking like the Tin Woodman; I mean machines that do things for you, such as this one which led us to our rooms, then hung around like a bellhop expecting a tip. It was a three-wheeled cart with a big basket on top, for luggage if we had had any. It met us, whistled to the Mother Thing in Vegan and led us away, down a lift and through a wide and endlessly long corridor.

I was given "my" room again—a fake of a fake, with all errors left in and new ones added. The sight of it was not reassuring; it shrieked that they planned to keep us there as long as . . . well, as long as *they* chose.

But the room was complete even to a rack for Oscar and a bathroom outside. Just beyond "my" room was a fake of another kind—a copy of that Arabian Nights horror Peewee had occupied on Vega IV. Peewee seemed delighted, so I didn't point out the implications.

The Mother Thing hovered around while we got out of space suits. [*"Do you think you will be comfortable?"*]

"Oh, sure," I agreed unenthusiastically.

[*"If you want food or anything, just say so. It will come."*]

"So? Is there a telephone somewhere?"

[*"Simply speak your wishes. You will be heard easily."*]

I didn't doubt her—but I was almost as tired of rooms that were bugged as of being locked up; a person ought to have privacy.

"I'm hungry now," Peewee commented. "I had an early breakfast."

We were in her room. A purple drapery drew back, a light glowed in the wall. In about two minutes a section of wall disappeared; a slab at table height stuck out like a tongue. On it were dishes and silverware, cold cuts, fruit, bread, butter, and a mug of steaming cocoa. Peewee clapped and squealed. I looked at it with less enthusiasm.

[*"You see?"*] the Mother Thing went on with a smile in her voice. [*"Ask for what you need. If you need me, I'll come. But I must go now."*]

"Oh, please don't go, Mother Thing."

[*"I must, Peewee dear. But I will see you soon. By the bye, there are two more of your people here."*]

"Huh?" I put in. "Who? Where?"

[*"Next door."*] She was gone with gliding swiftness; the bellhop speeded up to stay ahead of her.

I spun around. "Did you hear that?"

"I certainly did!"

"Well—you eat if you want to; I'm going to look for those other humans."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Hey! Wait for me!"

"I thought you wanted to eat."

"Well . . ." Peewee looked at the food. "Just a sec." She hastily buttered two slices of bread and handed one to me. I was not in that much of a hurry; I ate it. Peewee gobbled hers, took a gulp from the mug and offered it to me. "Want some?"

It wasn't quite cocoa; there was a meaty flavor, too. But it was good. I handed it back and she finished it. "Now I can fight wildcats. Let's go, Kip."

"Next door" was through the foyer of our three-room suite and fifteen yards down the corridor, where we came to a door arch. I kept Peewee back and glanced in cautiously.

It was a diorama, a fake scene. This one was better than you see in museums. I was looking through a bush at a small clearing in wild country. It ended in a limestone bank. I could see overcast sky and a cave mouth in the rocks. The ground was wet, as if from rain.

A cave man hunkered down close to the cave. He was gnawing the carcass of a small animal, possibly a squirrel.

Peewee tried to shove past me; I stopped her. The cave man did not appear to notice us which struck me as a good idea. His legs looked short but I think he weighed twice what I do and he was muscled like a weight lifter, with short, hairy forearms and knotty biceps and calves. His head was huge, bigger than mine and longer, but his forehead and chin weren't much. His teeth were large and yellow and a front one was broken. I heard bones crunching.

In a museum I would have expected a card reading NEANDERTHAL MAN: CIRCA LAST ICE AGE. But wax dummies of extinct breeds don't crack bones.

Peewee protested, "Hey, let me look."

He heard. Peewee stared at him, he stared toward us. Peewee squealed; he whirled and ran into the cave, waddling but making time.

I grabbed Peewee. "Let's get out of here!"

"Wait a minute," she said calmly. "He won't come out in a hurry." She tried to push the bush aside.

"Peewee!"

"Try this," she suggested. Her hand was shoving air. "They've got him penned."

I tried it. Something transparent blocked the arch. I could push it a little but not more than an inch. "Plastic?" I suggested. "Like Lucite but springier?"

"Mmm . . ." said Peewee. "More like the helmet of my suit. Tougher, though – and I'll bet light passes only one way. I don't think he saw us."

"OK, let's get back to our rooms.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Maybe we can get them locked."

She went on feeling that barrier. "Peewee!" I said sharply. "You're not listening."

"What were you doing talking," she answered reasonably, "when I wasn't listening?"

"Peewee! This is no time to be difficult."

"You sound like Daddy. He dropped that rat he was eating—he might come back."

"If he does, you won't be here, because I'm about to drag you—and if you bite, I'll bite back. I warn you."

She looked around without a trace of animosity. "I wouldn't bite you, Kip, no matter what you did. But if you're going to be stuffy—oh, well, I doubt if he'll come out for an hour or so. We'll come back."

"OK." I pulled her away.

But we did not leave. I heard a loud whistle and a shout: "Hey, buster! Over here!"

The words were not English, but I understood—well enough. The yell came from an archway across the corridor and a little farther on. I hesitated, then moved toward it because Peewee did so.

A man about 45 was lounging in this doorway. He was no Neanderthal; he was civilized—or somewhat so. He wore a long heavy woolen tunic, belted in at the waist, forming a sort of kilt. His legs below that were wrapped in wool and he was shod in heavy short boots, much worn. At the belt and supported by a shoulder sling was a short, heavy sword; there was a dagger on the other side of the belt. His hair was short and he was clean-shaven save for a few days' gray stubble. His expression was neither friendly nor unfriendly; it was sharply watchful.

"Thanks," he said gruffly. "Are you the jailer?"

Peewee gasped. "Why, that's Latin!"

What do you do when you meet a Legionary? Right after a cave man? I answered: "No, I am a prisoner myself." I said it in Spanish and repeated it in pretty fair classical Latin. I used Spanish because Peewee hadn't been quite correct. It was not Latin he spoke, not the Latin of Ovid. Nor was it Spanish. It was in between, with an atrocious accent and other differences. But I could worry out the meaning.

He sucked his lip and answered, "That's bad. I've been trying for three days to attract attention and all I get is another prisoner. But that's how the die rolls. Say, that's a funny accent you have."

"Sorry, amigo, but I have trouble understanding you, too." I repeated it in Latin, then split the difference. I added, in improvised lingua franca, "Speak slowly, will you?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I'll speak as I please. And don't call me 'amico'; I'm a Roman citizen—so don't get gay."

That's a free translation. His advice was more vulgar—I think. It was close to a Spanish phrase which certainly is vulgar.

"What's he saying?" demanded Peewee. "It *is* Latin, isn't it? Translate!"

I was glad she hadn't caught it. "Why, Peewee, don't you know 'the language of poetry and science'?"

"Oh, don't be a smarty! Tell me."

"Don't crowd me, hon. I'll tell you later. I'm having trouble following it."

"What is that barbarian grunting?" the Roman said. "Talk language, boy. Or will you have ten with the flat of the sword?"

He seemed to be leaning on nothing—so I felt the air. It was solid; I decided not to worry about his threat. "I'm talking as best I can. We spoke to each other in our own language."

"Pig grunts. Talk Latin. If you can." He looked at Peewee as if just noticing her. "Your daughter? Want to sell her? If she had meat on her bones, she might be worth a half denario."

Peewee clouded up. "I understood that!" she said fiercely. "Come out here and fight!"

"Try it in Latin," I advised her. "If he understands you, he'll probably spank you."

She looked uneasy. "You wouldn't let him?"

"You know I wouldn't."

"Let's go back."

"That's what I said earlier." I escorted her past the cave man's lair to our suite. "Peewee, I'm going back and see what our noble Roman has to say. Do you mind?"

"I certainly do!"

"Be reasonable, hon. If we could be hurt by them, the Mother Thing would know it. After all, she told us they were here."

"I'll go with you."

"What for? I'll tell you everything I learn. This may be a chance to find out what this silliness means. What's *he* doing here? Have they kept him in deep-freeze a couple of thousand years? How long has be been awake? What does he know that we don't? We're in a bad spot; all the data I can dig up we need. You can help by keeping out. If you're scared, send for the Mother Thing."

She pouted. "I'm not scared. All right—if that's the way you want it."

"I do. Eat your dinner."

Jo-Jo the dogface boy was not in sight! I gave his door a wide berth. If a ship can go anywhere in *no* time, could it skip a dimension and go anywhere to *any* time? How would the math work out? The soldier was still loung-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing at his door. He looked up. "Didn't you hear me say to stick around?"

"I heard you," I admitted, "but we're not going to get anywhere if you take that attitude. I'm not one of your privates."

"Lucky for you!"

"Do we talk peacefully? Or do I leave?"

He looked me over. "Peace. But don't get smart with me, barbarian."

He called himself "Iunio." He had served in Spain and Gaul, then transferred to the VIth Legion, the "Victrix"—which he felt that even a barbarian should know of. His legion's garrison was Eboracum, north of Londinium in Britain, but he had been on advance duty as a brevet centurion (he pronounced it "centurio")—his permanent rank was about like top sergeant. He was smaller than I am but I would not want to meet him in an alley. Nor at the palisades of a castra.

He had a low opinion of Britons and all barbarians including me ("nothing personal—some of my best friends are barbarians"), women, the British climate, high brass, and priests; he thought well of Caesar, Rome, the gods, and his own professional ability. The army wasn't what it used to be and the slump came from treating auxiliaries like Roman citizens.

He had been guarding the building of a wall to hold back barbarians, a nasty lot who would sneak up and slit your throat and eat you—which no doubt had happened to him, since he was now in the nether regions.

I thought he was talking about Hadrian's Wall, but it was three days' march north of there, where the seas were closest together. The climate there was terrible and the natives were bloodthirsty beasts who dyed their bodies and didn't appreciate civilization—you'd think the Eagles were trying to steal their dinky island. Provincial . . . like me. No offense meant.

Nevertheless he had bought a little barbarian to wife and had been looking forward to garrison duty at Eboracum—when this happened. Iunio shrugged. "Perhaps if I had been careful with lustrations and sacrifices, my luck wouldn't have run out. But I figure that if a man does his duty and keeps himself and his weapons clean, the rest is the C.O.'s worry. Careful of that doorway; it's witched."

The longer he talked the easier it was to understand him. The *"us"* endings turned to *"-o"* and his vocabulary was not that of *De Bello Gallico*—*"horse"* wasn't *"equus"*; it was *"caballo."* His idioms bothered me, and his Latin was diluted by a dozen barbarian tongues. But you can blank out every third word in a newspaper and still catch the gist.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I learned a lot about the daily Life and petty politics of the Victrix and nothing that I wanted to know. Iunio did not know how he had gotten where he was nor why, except that he was dead and awaiting disposition in a receiving barracks somewhere in the nether world—a theory which I was not yet prepared to accept.

He knew the year of his "death" —Year Eight of the Emperor and Eight Hundred Ninety-Nine of Rome. I wrote out the dates in Roman numerals to make sure. But I did not remember when Rome was founded nor could I identify the "Caesar" even by his full name—there have been so many Caesars. But Hadrian's Wall had been built and Britain was still occupied; that placed Iunio close to the third century.

He wasn't interested in the cave man across the way—it embodied to him the worst vice of a barbarian: cowardice. I didn't argue but I would be timid, too, if I had saber-tooth tigers yowling at my door. (Did they have saber-tooths then? Make it "cave bears.")

Iunio went back and returned with hard dark bread, cheese, and a cup. He did not offer me any and I don't think it was the barrier. He poured a little of his drink on the floor and started to chomp. It was a mud floor; the walls were rough stone and the ceiling was supported by wooden beams. It may have been a copy of dwellings during the occupation of Britain, but I'm no expert.

I didn't stay much longer. Not only did bread and cheese remind me that I was hungry, but I offended Iunio. I don't know what set him off, but he discussed me with cold thoroughness: my eating habits, ancestry, appearance, conduct, and method of earning a living. Iunio was pleasant—as long as you agreed with him, ignored insults, and deferred to him. Many older people demand this, even in buying a 39-cent can of talcum; you learn to give it without thinking—otherwise you get a reputation as a fresh kid and potential juvenile delinquent. The less respect an older person deserves the more certain he is to demand it from anyone younger. So I left, as Iunio didn't know anything helpful anyhow. As I went back I saw the cave man peering out his cave. I said, "Take it easy, Jo-Jo," and went on.

I bumped into another invisible barrier blocking our archway. I felt it, then said quietly, "I want to go in." The barrier melted away and I walked in—found that it was back in place.

My rubber soles made no noise and I didn't call out because Peewee might be asleep. Her door was open and I peeped in. She was sitting tailor-fashion on that incredible oriental divan, rocking Madame Pompadour and crying.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I backed away, then returned whistling, making a racket, and calling to her. She popped out of her door, with smiling face and no trace of tears. "Hi, Kip! It took you long enough."

"That guy talks too much. What's new?"

"Nothing. I ate and you didn't come back, so I took a nap. You woke me. What did you find out?"

"Let me order dinner and I'll tell you while I eat."

I was chasing the last bit of gravy when a bellhop robot came for us. It was like the other one except that it had in glowing gold on its front that triangle with three spirals. "Follow me," it said in English.

I looked at Peewee. "Didn't the Mother Thing say she was coming back?"

"Why, I thought so."

The machine repeated, "Follow me. Your presence is required."

I laid my ears back. I have taken lots of orders, some of which I shouldn't have, but I had never yet taken orders from a piece of machinery. "Go climb a rope!" I said. "You'll have to drag me."

This is not what to say to a robot. It did.

Peewee yelled, "*Mother Thing!* Where are you? Help us!"

Her birdsong came out of the machine. ["*It's all right, dears. The servant will lead you to me.*"]

I quit struggling and started to walk. That refugee from an appliance dealer took us into another lift, then into a corridor whose walls whizzed past as soon as we entered. It nudged us through an enormous archway topped by the triangle-and-spirals and herded us into a pen near one wall. The pen was not apparent until we moved—more of that annoying solid air.

It was the biggest room I have ever been in: triangular, unbroken by post or pillar, with ceiling so high and walls so distant that I half expected local thunder storms. An enormous room makes me feel like an ant; I was glad to be near a wall. The room was not empty—hundreds in it—but it looked empty because they were all near the walls; the giant floor was bare.

But there were three wormfaces out in the center—Wormface's trial was in progress.

I don't know if our own Wormface was there. I would not have known even if they had not been a long way off as the difference between two wormfaces is the difference between having your throat cut and being beheaded. But, as we learned, the presence or absence of the individual offender was the least important part of a trial. Wormface was being tried, present or not—alive or dead.

The Mother Thing was speak-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing. I could see her tiny figure, also far out on the floor but apart from the wormfaces. Her bird-song voice reached me faintly but I heard her words clearly—in English; from somewhere near us her translated words were piped to us. The feel of her was in the English translation just as it was in her bird tones.

She was telling what she knew of wormface conduct, as dispassionately as if describing something under a microscope, like a traffic officer testifying: "At nine seventeen on the fifth, while on duty at—" etc. The facts. The Mother Thing was finishing her account of events on Pluto. She chopped it off at the point of the explosion.

Another voice spoke, in English. It was flat with a nasal twang and reminded me of a Vermont grocer we had dealt with one summer when I was a kid. He was a man who never smiled nor frowned and what little he said was all in the same tone, whether it was "She is a good woman," or "That man would cheat his own son," or "Eggs are fifty-nine cents," cold as a cash register. This voice was that sort. It said to the Mother Thing:

"Have you finished?"

"I have finished."

"The other witnesses will be heard. Clifford Russell—"

I jumped, as if that grocer had caught me in the candy jar. The voice went on impersonally:

"—listen carefully." Another voice started.

My own. It was the account I had dictated, flat on my back on Vega IV.

But it wasn't all of it; it was just that which concerned wormfaces. Adjectives and whole sentences had been cut—as if someone had taken scissors to a tape recording. The facts were there; what I thought about them was missing.

It started with ships landing in the pasture back of our house; it ended with that last wormface stumbling blindly down a hole. It wasn't long, as so much had been left out—our hike across the Moon, for example. My description of Wormface was left in but had been trimmed so much that I could have been talking about Venus de Milo instead of the ugliest thing in creation.

My recorded voice ended and the Yankee-grocer voice said, "Were those your words?"

"Huh? Yes."

"Is the account correct?"

"Yes, but—"

"Is it correct?"

"Yes."

"Is it complete?"

I wanted to say that it certainly was *not*—but I was beginning to understand the system. "Yes."

"Patricia Wynant Reisfeld—"

Peewee's story started earlier and covered all those days when

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

she had been in contact with wormfaces while I was not. But it was not much longer, for, while Peewee has a sharp eye and a sharper memory, she is loaded with opinions. Opinions were left out.

When Peewee had agreed that her evidence was correct and complete the Yankee voice stated, "All witnesses have been heard, all known facts have been integrated. The three individuals may speak for themselves."

I think the wormfaces picked a spokesman, perhaps *the* Wormface, if he was alive and there. Their answer, as translated into English, did not have the guttural accent with which Wormface spoke English; nevertheless it was a wormface speaking. That bone-chilling yet highly intelligent viciousness, as unmistakable as a punch in the teeth, was in every syllable.

Their spokesman was so far away that I was not upset by his looks and after the first stomach-twisting shock of that voice I was able to listen more or less judicially. He started by denying that this court had jurisdiction over his sort. He was responsible only to his mother-queen and she only to their queen-group—that's how the English came out.

That defense, he claimed, was sufficient. However, if the "Three Galaxies" confederation existed—which he had no reason to believe other than that he was now being detained unlawfully before this hiveful of creatures met as a kangaroo court—if it existed, it still had no jurisdiction over the Only People, first, because the organization did not extend to his part of space; second, because even if it were there, the Only People had never joined and therefore its rules (if it had rules) could not apply; and third, it was inconceivable that their queen-group would associate itself with this improbable "Three Galaxies" because people do not contract with animals.

This defense also was sufficient.

But disregarding for the sake of argument these complete and sufficient defenses, this trial was a mockery because no offense existed even under the so-called rules of the alleged "Three Galaxies." They (the wormfaces) had been operating in their own part of space engaged in occupying a useful but empty planet, Earth. No possible crime could lie in colonizing land inhabited merely by animals. As for the agent of Three Galaxies, she had butted in; she had not been harmed; she had merely been kept from interfering and had been detained only for the purpose of returning her where she belonged.

He should have stopped. Any of these defenses might have stood up, especially the last one. I used to think of the human

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

race as "lords of creation"—but things had happened to me since. I was not sure that this assemblage would think that humans had rights compared with wormfaces. Certainly the wormfaces were ahead of us in many ways. When we clear jungle to make farms, do we worry if baboons are there first?

But he discarded these defenses, explained that they were intellectual exercises to show how foolish the whole thing was under *any* rules, from *any* point of view. He would now make his defense.

It was an attack.

The viciousness in his voice rose to a crescendo of hatred that made every word slam like a blow. How *dared* they do this? They were mice voting to bell the cat! (I know—but that's how it came out in translation.) They were animals to be eaten, or merely vermin to be exterminated. Their mercy would be rejected if offered, no negotiation was possible, their crimes would never be forgotten, the Only People would destroy them!

I looked around to see how the jury was taking it. This almost-empty hall had hundreds of creatures around the three sides and many were close to us. I had been too busy with the trial to do more than glance at them. Now I looked, for the wormface's blast was so disturbing that I gladly welcomed a distraction.

They were all sorts and I'm not sure that any two were alike. There was one twenty feet from me who was as horrible as Wormface and amazingly like him—except that this creature's grisly appearance did not inspire disgust. There were others almost human in appearance, although they were greatly in the minority. There was one really likely-looking chick as human as I am—except for iridescent skin and odd and skimpy notions of dress. She was so pretty that I would have sworn that the iridescence was just make-up—but I probably would have been wrong. I wondered in what language the diatribe was reaching her? Certainly not English.

Perhaps she felt my stare, for she looked around and unsmilingly examined me, as I might a chimpanzee in a cage. I guess the attraction wasn't mutual.

There was every gradation from pseudo-wormface to the iridescent girl—not only the range between, but also 'way out in left field; some had their own private aquaria.

I could not tell how the invective affected them. The girl creature was taking it quietly, but what can you say about a walrus thing with octopus arms? If he twitches, is he angry? Or laughing? Or itches where the twitch is?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Yankee-voiced spokesman let the wormface rave on.

Peewee was holding my hand. Now she grabbed my ear, tilted her face and whispered, "He talks nasty." She sounded awed.

The wormface ended with a blast of hate that must have overtaxed the translator for instead of English we heard a wordless scream.

The Yankee voice said flatly, "But do you have anything to say in your defense?"

The scream was repeated, then the wormface became coherent. "I have made my defense—that no defense is necessary."

The emotionless voice went on, to the Mother Thing. "Do you speak for them?"

She answered reluctantly, "My lord peers . . . I am forced to say . . . that I found them to be quite naughty." She sounded grieved.

"You find against them?"

"I do."

"Then you may not be heard. Such is the Law."

"'Three Galaxies, One Law.' I may not speak."

The flat voice went on, "Will any witness speak favorably?"

There was silence.

That was my chance to be noble. We humans were their victims; we were in a position to speak up, point out that from their standpoint they hadn't done anything wrong, and ask mercy —if they would promise to behave in the future.

Well, I didn't. I've heard all the usual Sweetness & Light that kids get pushed at them—how you should always forgive, how there's some good in the worst of us, etc. But when I see a black widow, I step on it; I don't plead with it to be a good little spider and please stop poisoning people. A black widow spider can't help it —but that's the point.

The voice said to the wormfaces: "Is there any race anywhere which might speak for you? If so, it will be summoned."

The spokesman wormface spat at the idea. That another race might be character witnesses for them disgusted him.

"So be it," answered the Yankee voice. "Are the facts sufficient to permit a decision?"

Again it answered itself: "Their planet shall be rotated."

It didn't sound like much—shucks, all planets rotate—and the flat voice held no expression. But the verdict scared me. The whole room seemed to shudder.

The Mother Thing turned and came toward us. It was a long way but she reached us quickly. Peewee flung herself on her; the solid air that penned us solidified still more until we three were in a private room, a silvery hemisphere.

Peewee was trembling and gasping and the Mother Thing com-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

forted her. When Peewee had control of herself, I said nervously, "Mother Thing? What did he mean? 'Their planet shall be rotated.'"

She looked at me without letting go of Peewee and her great soft eyes were sternly sad.

"It means that their planet is tilted ninety degrees out of the space-time of your senses and mine."

Her voice sounded like a funeral dirge played softly on a flute. Yet the verdict did not seem tragic to me. I knew what she meant; her meaning was even clearer in Vegan than in English. If you rotate a plane figure about an axis in its plane—it disappears. It is no longer in a plane and Mr. A. Square of Flatland is permanently out of touch with it.

But it doesn't cease to exist; it just is no longer where it was. It struck me that the wormfaces were getting off easy. I had halfway expected their planet to be blown up (and I didn't doubt that Three Galaxies could do so), or something equally drastic. As it was, the wormfaces were to be run out of town and would never find their way back—there are so many, many dimensions—but they wouldn't be hurt; they were just being placed in Coventry.

But the Mother Thing sounded as if she had taken unwilling part in a hanging.

So I asked her.

"You do not understand, dear gentle Kip—they do not take their star with them."

"Oh," was all I could say.

Peewee turned white.

Stars are the source of life; planets are merely life's containers. Chop off the star and the planet gets colder . . . and colder . . . and *colder*—then still colder.

How long until the very air freezes? How many hours or days to absolute zero? I shivered and got goose pimples. Worse than Pluto—

"Mother Thing? How long before they do this?" I had a queasy misgiving that I should have spoken, that even wormfaces did not deserve *this*. Blow them up, shoot them down—but don't freeze them.

"It is done," she sang in that same dirgelike way.

"What?"

"The agent charged with executing the decision waits for the word . . . the message goes out the instant we hear it. They were rotated out of our world even before I turned to join you. It is better so."

I gulped and heard an echo in my mind: *'. . . 'twere well it were done quickly."*

But the Mother Thing was saying rapidly, *"Think no more on 't, for now you must be brave!"*

"Huh? What, Mother Thing? What happens now?"

"You'll be summoned any mo-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment now—for your own trial."

I simply stared. I could not speak. I had thought it was all over. Peewee looked still thinner and whiter but did not cry. She wet her lips and said quietly, "You'll come with us, Mother Thing?"

"Oh, my children! I cannot. You must face this alone."

I found my voice. "But what are *we* being tried for? We haven't hurt anybody. We haven't done a thing."

"Not you personally. Your race is on trial. Through you."

Peewee turned away from her and looked at me—and I felt a thrill of tragic pride that in our moment of extremity she had turned, not to the Mother Thing, but to *me*, another human being.

I knew that she was thinking of the same thing I was: a ship, a ship hanging close to Earth, only an instant away and yet perhaps uncounted trillion miles in some pocket of folded space, where no DEW line gives warning, where no radar can reach.

The Earth, green and gold and lovely, turning lazily in the warm light of the Sun . . .

A flat voice: No more Sun.

No stars.

The orphaned Moon would bobble once, then continue around the Sun, a gravestone to the hopes of men. The few at Lunar Base and Luna City and Tombaugh Station would last weeks or even months, the only human beings left alive. Then they would go—if not of suffocation, then of grief and loneliness.

Peewee said shrilly, "Kip, she's not serious! Tell me she's not!"

I said hoarsely, "Mother Thing—are the executioners already waiting?"

She did not answer. She said to Peewee, *"It is very serious, my daughter. But do not be afraid. I exacted a promise before I surrendered you. If things go against your race, you two will return with me and be suffered to live out your lives in my home. So stand up and tell the truth . . . and do not be afraid."*

The flat voice entered the closed space: "The human beings are summoned."

XI

We walked out onto that vast floor. The farther we went the more I felt like a fly on a plate. Having Peewee with me was a help; nevertheless it was that nightmare where you find yourself not decently dressed in a public place. Peewee clutched my hand and held Madame Pompadour pressed tightly to her. I wished that I had suited-up in Oscar—I wouldn't have felt quite so under a microscope with Oscar around me.

Just before we left, the Mother Thing placed her hand against my

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

forehead and started to hold me with her eyes. I pushed her hand aside and looked away. "No," I told her. "No treatments! I'm not going to—oh, I know you mean well but I won't take an anesthetic. Thanks."

She did not insist; she simply turned to Peewee. Peewee looked uncertain, then shook her head. "We're ready," she piped.

The farther out we got on that great bare floor the more I regretted that I had not let the Mother Thing do whatever it was that kept one from worrying. At least I should have insisted that Peewee take it.

Coming at us from the other walls were two other flies; as they got closer I recognized them: the Neanderthal and the Legionary. The cave man was being dragged invisibly; the Roman covered ground in a long, slow, easy lope. We all arrived at the center at the same time and were stopped about twenty feet apart, Peewee and I at one point of a triangle, the Roman and the cave man each at another.

I called out, "Hail, Iunio!"

"Silence, barbarian." He looked around him, his eyes estimating the crowd at the walls.

He was no longer in casual dress. The untidy leggings were gone; strapped to his right shin was armor. Over the tunic he wore full cuirass and his head was brave with plumed helmet. All metal was burnished, all leather was clean.

He had approached with his shield on his back, route march style. But even as we were stopped he unslung it and raised it on his left arm. He did not draw sword as his right hand held his javelin at the ready—carried easily while his wary eyes assessed the foe.

To his left the cave man hunkered himself small, as an animal crouches who has no place to hide.

"Iunio!" I called out. "Listen!" The sight of those two had me still more worried. The cave man I could not talk to but perhaps I could reason with the Roman. "Do you know why we are here?"

"I know," he tossed over his shoulder. "Today the gods try us in their arena. This is work for a soldier and a Roman citizen. You're no help so keep out. No: watch behind me and shout. Caesar will reward you."

I started to try to talk sense but was cut off by a giant voice from everywhere:

"YOU ARE NOW BEING JUDGED!"

Peewee shivered and got closer. I twisted my left hand out of her clutch, substituted my right, and put my left arm around her shoulders. "Head up, partner," I said softly. "Don't let them scare you."

"I'm not scared," she whispered as she trembled. "Kip? You do the talking."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Is that the way you want it?"

"Yes. You don't get mad as fast as I do—and if I lost my temper . . . well, that'ud be *awful.*"

"OK."

We were interrupted by that flat, nasal twang. As before, it seemed close by. "This case derives from the one preceding it. The three temporal samples are from a small Lanador-type planet around a star in an out-center part of the Third Galaxy. It is a very primitive area having no civilized races. This race, as you see from the samples, is barbaric. It has been examined twice before and would not yet be up for routine examination had not new facts about it come out in the case which preceded it."

The voice asked itself: "When was the last examination made?"

It answered itself: "Approximately one half-death of Thorium-230 ago." It added, apparently to us only: "About eighty thousand of your years."

Iunio jerked his head and looked around, as if trying to locate the voice. I concluded that he had heard the same figure in his corrupt Latin. Well, I was startled too—but I was numb to that sort of shock.

"Is it necessary again so soon?"

"It is. There has been a discontinuity. They are developing with unexpected speed." The flat voice went on, speaking to us: "I am your judge. Many of the civilized beings you see around you are part of me. Others are spectators, some are students, and a few are here because they hope to catch me in a mistake." The voice added, "This they have not managed to do in more than a million of your years."

I blurted out, "You are more than a million years old?" I did not add that I didn't believe it.

The voice answered, "I am older than that, but no part of me is that old. I am partly machine, which part can be repaired, replaced, recopied; I am partly alive, these parts die and are replaced. My living parts are more than a dozen dozens of dozens of civilized beings from throughout Three Galaxies, any dozen dozens of which may join with my non-living part to act. Today I am two hundred and nine qualified beings, who have at their instant disposal all knowledge accumulated in my non-living part and all its ability to analyze and integrate."

I said sharply, "Are your decisions made unanimously?" I thought I saw a loophole—I never had much luck mixing up Dad and Mother but there had been times as a kid when I had managed to confuse issues by getting one to answer one way and the other to answer another.

The voice added evenly, "Decisions are always unanimous. It may help you to think of me as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one person." It addressed everyone: "Standard sampling has been followed. The contemporary sample is the double one; the intermediate sample for curve check is the clothed single sample and was taken by standard random at a spacing of approximately one half-death of radium-226." The voice supplemented: "Call it sixteen hundred of your years.—The remote curve-check sample, by standard procedure, was taken at two dozen times that distance."

The voice asked itself: "Why is curve-check spacing so short? Why not at least a dozen times that?"

"Because this organism's generations are very short. It mutates rapidly."

The explanation appeared to satisfy for it went on, "The youngest sample will witness first."

I thought he meant Peewee and so did she; she cringed. But the voice barked and the cave man jerked. He did not answer; he simply crouched more deeply into himself.

The voice barked again.

It then said to itself, "I observe something."

"Speak."

"This creature is not ancestor to those others."

The voice of the machine almost seemed to betray emotion, as if my dour grocer had found salt in his sugar bin. "The sample was properly taken."

"Nevertheless," it answered, "it is not a correct sample. You must review all pertinent data."

For a long five seconds was silence. Then the voice spoke: "This poor creature is not ancestor to these others; he is cousin only. He has no future of his own. Let him be returned at once to the space-time whence he came."

The Neanderthal was dragged rapidly away. I watched him out of sight with a feeling of loss. I had been afraid of him at first. Then I had despised him and was ashamed of him. He was a coward, he was filthy, he stank. A dog was more civilized. But in the past five minutes I had decided that I had better love him, see his good points—for, unsavory as he was, he was *human*. Maybe he wasn't my remote grandfather, but I was in no mood to disown even my sorriest relation.

The voice argued with itself, deciding whether the trial could proceed. Finally it stated: "Examination will continue. If enough facts are not developed, another remote sample of correct lineage will be summoned. Iunio."

The Roman raised his javelin higher. "Who calls Iunio?"

"Stand forth and bear witness."

Just as I feared, Iunio told the voice where to go and what to do. There was no protecting Peewee from his language; it echoed back in English—not that it mattered now whether Peewee

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was protected from "unladylike" influences.

The flat voice went on imperturbably: "Is this your voice? Is this your witnessing?" Immediately another voice started up which I recognized as that of the Roman, answering questions, giving accounts of battle, speaking of treatment of prisoners. This we got only in English but the translation held the arrogant timbre of Iunio's voice.

Iunio shouted "Witchcraft!" and made horns at them.

The recording cut off. "The voice matches," the machine said dryly. "The recording will be integrated."

But it continued to peck at Iunio, asking him details about who he was, why he was in Britain, what he had done there, and why it was necessary to serve Caesar. Iunio gave short answers then blew his top. He let out a rebel yell that bounced around that mammoth room, drew back and let fly his javelin.

It fell short. But I think he broke the Olympic record.

I found myself cheering.

Iunio drew his sword while the javelin was still rising. He flung it up in a gladiatorial challenge, shouting, "Hail, Caesar!" and dropped into guard.

He reviled them. He told them what he thought of vermin who were not citizens, not even *barbarians!*

I said to myself, "Oh, oh! There goes the game. Human race, you've had it."

Iunio went on and on, calling on his gods to help him, each way worse than the last, threatening them with Caesar's vengeance in gruesome detail. I hoped that, even though it was translated, Peewee would not understand much of it. But she probably did; she understood entirely too much.

I began to grow proud of him. That wormface, in diatribe, was evil; Iunio was not. Under bad grammar, worse language, and rough manner, that tough old sergeant had courage, human dignity, and a basic gallantry. He might be an old scoundrel—but he was *my* kind of scoundrel.

He finished by demanding that they come at him, one at a time —or let them form a turtle and he would take them all on at once. "I'll make a funeral pyre of you! I'll temper my blade in your guts! I, who am about to die, will show you a Roman's grave—piled high with Caesar's enemies!"

He had to catch his breath. I cheered again and Peewee joined in. He looked over his shoulder and grinned. "Slit their throats as I bring them down, boy! There's work to do!"

The cold voice said: "Let him now be returned to the space-time whence he came."

Iunio looked startled as invi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sible hands pulled him along. He called on Mars and Jove and laid about him. The sword clattered to the floor, picked itself up and returned itself to his scabbard. Iunio was moving rapidly away; I cupped my hands and yelled, "Goodby, Iunio!"

"Farewell, boy! They're *cowards*!" He shook himself. "Nothing but filthy witchcraft!" Then he was gone.

"Clifford Russell—"

"Huh? I'm here." Peewee squeezed my hand.

"Is this your voice?"

I said, "Wait a minute—"

"Yes? Speak."

I took a breath. Peewee pushed closer and whispered, "Make it good, Kip. They mean it."

"I'll try, kid," I whispered, then went on, "What is this? I was told you intend to judge the human race."

"That is correct."

"But you *can't*. You haven't enough to go on. No better than witchcraft, just as Iunio said. You brought in a cave man—then decided he was a mistake. That isn't your only mistake. You had Iunio here. Whatever he was—and I'm not ashamed of him; I'm proud of him—he's got nothing to do with *now*. He's been dead two thousand years, pretty near—if you've sent him back, I mean—and all that he was is dead with him. Good or bad, he's not what the human race is *now*."

"I know that. You two are the test sample of your race now."

"Yes—but you can't judge from *us*. Peewee and I are about as far from average as any specimens can be. We don't claim to be angels, either one of us. If you condemn our race on what *we* have done, you do a great injustice. Judge *us*—or judge *me*, at least—"

"Me, too!"

"—on whatever I've done. But don't hold my people responsible. That's not scientific. That's not valid mathematics."

"It is valid."

"It is *not*. Human beings aren't molecules; they're all different." I decided not to argue about jurisdiction; the wormfaces had ruined that approach.

"Agreed, human beings are not molecules. But they are not individuals, either."

"Yes, they are!"

"They are not independent individuals; they are parts of a single organism. Each cell in your body contains your whole pattern. From three samples of the organism you call the human race I can predict the future potentialities and limits of that race."

"We have no limits! There's no telling what our future will be."

"It may be that you have no limits," the voice agreed. "That is to be determined. But, if true, it is not a point in your favor. For *we* have limits."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Huh?"

"You have misunderstood the purpose of this examination. You speak of 'justice.' I know what you think you mean. But no two races have ever agreed on the meaning of that term, no matter how they say it. It is not a concept I deal with here. This is not a court of justice."

"Then what is it?"

"You would call it a 'Security Council.' Or you might call it a committee of vigilantes. It does not matter what you call it; my sole purpose is to examine your race and see if you threaten our survival. If you do, I will now dispose of you. The only certain way to avert a grave danger is to remove it while it is small. Things that I have learned about you suggest a possibility that you may someday threaten the security of Three Galaxies. I will now determine the facts."

"But you said that you have to have at least three samples. The cave man was no good."

"We have three samples, you two and the Roman. But the facts could be determined from one sample. The use of three is a custom from earlier times, a cautious habit of checking and rechecking. I cannot dispense 'justice'; I can make sure not to produce error."

I was about to say that he was wrong, even if he was a million years old. But the voice went on, "I continue the examination. Clifford Russell, is this your voice?"

My voice sounded then, and again it was my own dictated account but this time everything was left in—purple adjectives, personal opinions, comments about other matters, every word and stutter.

I listened to enough of it, held up my hand. "All right, all right, I said it."

The recording stopped. "Do you confirm it?"

"Eh? Yes."

"Do you wish to add, subtract, or change?"

I thought hard. Aside from a few wisecracks that I had tucked in later it was a straightforward account. "No. I stand on it."

"And is this also your voice?"

This one fooled me. It was that endless recording I had made for Prof Joe about . . . well, everything on Earth: history, customs, peoples, the works. Suddenly I knew why Prof Joe had worn the same badge the Mother Thing wore. What did they call that? —"planting a stool pigeon." Good Old Prof Joe, the no-good, had been a stoolie.

I felt sick.

"Let me hear more of it."

They accommodated me. I didn't really listen; I was trying to remember, not what I was hearing, but what else I might have said —what I had admitted that could be used against the human race.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Crusades? Slavery? The gas chambers at Dachau? *How much had I said?*

The recording droned on. Why, that thing had taken *weeks* to record; we could stand here until our feet went flat.

"It's my voice."

"Do you stand on this, too? Or do you wish to correct, revise, or extend?"

I said cautiously, "Can I do the whole thing over?"

"If you so choose."

I started to say that I would, that they should wipe the tape and start over. But would they? Or would they keep both and compare them? I had no compunction about lying—"tell the truth and shame the devil" is no virtue when your family and friends and your whole race are at stake.

But could they tell if I lied?

"The Mother Thing said to tell the truth and not to be afraid."

"But she's not on our side!"

"Oh, yes, she is."

I had to answer. I was so confused that I couldn't think. I had tried to tell the truth to Prof Joe . . . oh, maybe I had shaded things, not included every horrid thing that makes a headline. But it was essentially true.

Could I do better under pressure? Would they let me start fresh and accept any propaganda I cooked up? Or would the fact that I changed stories be used to condemn our race?

"I stand on it!"

"Let it be integrated. Patricia Wynant Reisfeld—"

Peewee took only moments to identify and allow to be integrated her recordings; she simply followed my example.

The machine voice said: "The facts have been integrated. By their own testimony, these are a savage and brutal people, given to all manner of atrocities. They eat each other, they starve each other, they kill each other. They have no art and only the most primitive of science, yet such is their violent nature that even with so little knowledge they are now energetically using it to exterminate each other, tribe against tribe. Their driving will is such that they may succeed. But if by some unlucky chance they fail, they will inevitably, in time, reach other stars. It is this possibility which must be calculated: how soon they will reach us, if they live, and what their potentialities will be then."

The voice continued to us: "This is the indictment against you: your own savagery, combined with superior intelligence. What have you to say in your defense?"

I took a breath and tried to steady down. I knew that we had lost—yet I had to try.

I remembered how the Mother Thing had spoken. "My lord peers—"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Correction. We are not your 'lords,' nor has it been established that you are our equals. If you wish to address someone, you may call me the 'Moderator.'"

"Yes, Mr. Moderator—" I tried to remember what Socrates had said to his judges. He knew ahead of time that he was condemned just as we knew—but somehow, though he had been forced to drink hemlock, he had won and they had lost.

No! I couldn't use his *Apologia;* all he had lost was his *own* life. This was *everybody.*

"—you say we have no art. Have you seen the Parthenon?"

"Blown up in one of your wars."

"Better see it before you rotate us—or you'll be missing something. Have you heard our poetry? *'Our revels now are ended: these our actors, as I foretold you, were all spirits, and are melted into air, into thin air: and, like the baseless fabric of this vision, the cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples, the great globe itself . . . itself—yea—all which it . . . inherit—shall dissolve—"*

I broke down. I heard Peewee sobbing beside me. I don't know why I picked that one; but they say the subconscious mind never does things "accidentally." I guess it had to be that one.

"As it well may," commented the merciless voice.

"I don't think it's any of your *business* what we do—as long as we leave you alone—" My stammer was back and I was almost sobbing.

"We have made it our business."

"We aren't under your government and—"

"Correction. Three Galaxies is not a government; conditions for government cannot obtain in so vast a space, such varied cultures. We have simply formed police districts for mutual protection."

"But—even so, we haven't troubled your cops. We were in our own backyards—I *was* in my own backyard!—when these wormface things came along and started troubling *us.* We haven't hurt *you.*"

"You may in time. That is what I am considering."

I stopped, wondering where to turn. I couldn't guarantee good behavior, not for the whole human race—the machine knew it and I knew it.

"Inquiry." It was talking to itself again. "These creatures appear to be identical with the Old Race, allowing for mutation. What part of the Third Galaxy are they from?"

It answered itself, naming coordinates that meant nothing to me. "But they are not of the Old Race; they are ephemerals. That is the danger; they change too fast."

"Didn't the Old Race lose a ship out that way a few half-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

deaths of Thorium-230 ago? Could that account for the fact that the youngest sample failed to match?"

It answered firmly, "It is immaterial whether or not they may be descended from the Old Race. An examination is in progress; a decision must be made."

"The decision must be sure."

"It will be." The bodyless voice went on, to us: "Have either of you anything to add in your defense?"

I had been thinking of what had been said about the miserable state of our science. I wanted to point out that we had gone from muscle power to atomic power in only two centuries—but I was afraid that fact would be used against us. "Peewee, can you think of *anything*?"

She suddenly stepped forward and shrilled to the air, "Doesn't it count that Kip saved the Mother Thing?"

"No," that cold voice answered. "It is irrelevant."

"Well, it ought to count!" She was crying again. "You ought to be *ashamed* of yourselves! Bullies! *Cowards!* Oh, you're worse than wormfaces!"

I pulled her back. She hid her head against my shoulder and shook. Then she whispered, "I'm sorry, Kip. I didn't mean to. I guess I've ruined it."

"It was ruined anyhow, honey."

"Have you anything more to say?" old no-face went on relentlessly.

I looked around at the hall.—*the cloud-capped towers . . . the great globe itself—*" "Just this!" I said savagely. "It's not a defense, you don't want a *defense.* All right, take away our star—You will if you can and I guess you can. Go ahead! We'll *make* a star! Then, someday, we'll come back and hunt you down—*all of you!*"

"That's telling 'em, Kip! That's telling them!"

Nobody bawled me out. I suddenly felt like a kid who has made a horrible mistake at a party and doesn't know how to cover it up.

But I meant it. Oh, I didn't think we could *do* it. Not yet. But we'd *try.* "Die trying" is the proudest human thing.

"It is possible that you will," that infuriating voice went on. "Are you through?"

"I'm through." We all were through . . . every one of us.

"Does anyone speak for them? Humans, will any race speak for you?"

We didn't *know* any other races. Dogs—Maybe dogs would.

"I speak for them!"

Peewee raised her head with a jerk. "Mother Thing!"

Suddenly she was in front of us. Peewee tried to run to her, bounced off that invisible barrier. I grabbed her. "Easy, hon. She isn't there—it's some sort of television."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"My lord peers . . . you have the advantage of many minds and much knowledge—" It was odd to see her singing, hear her in English; the translation still held that singing quality.

"—but *I* know them. It is true that they are violent—especially the smaller one—but they are not more violent than is appropriate to their ages. Can we expect mature restraint in a race whose members all must die in early childhood? And are not we ourselves violent? Have we not this day killed our billions? Can any race survive without a willingness to fight? It is true that these creatures are often more violent than is necessary or wise. But, my peers, they all are so very young. Give them time to learn."

"That is exactly what there is to fear, that they may learn. Your race is overly sentimental; it distorts your judgment."

"Not true! We are compassionate, we are *not* foolish. I myself have been the proximate cause of how many, many adverse decisions? You know; it is in your records—I prefer not to remember. And I shall be again. When a branch is diseased beyond healing, it must be pruned. We are not sentimental; we are the best watchers you have ever found, for we do it without anger. Toward evil we have no mercy. But the mistakes of a child we treat with loving forbearance."

"Have you finished?"

"I say that this branch need not be pruned! I have finished."

The Mother Thing's image vanished. The voice went on, "Does any other race speak for them?"

"I do." Where she had been now stood a large green monkey. He stared at us and shook his head, then suddenly did a somersault and finished looking at us between his legs. "I'm no friend of theirs but I am a lover of 'justice'—in which I differ from my colleagues in this Council." He twirled rapidly several times. "As our sister has said, this race is young. The infants of my own noble race bite and scratch each other—some even die from it. Even *I* behaved so, at one time." He jumped into the air, landed on his hands, did a flip from that position. "Yet does anyone here deny that *I* am civilized?" He stopped, looked at us thoughtfully while scratching. "These are brutal savages and I don't see how anyone could ever *like* them—but *I* say: give them their chance!"

The voice said, "Have you anything to add before a decision is reached?"

I started to say: No, get it over with—when Peewee grabbed my ear and whispered. I listened, nodded, and spoke. "Mr. Moderator—if the verdict is against us—can you hold off your hangmen

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

long enough to let us *go home*? We know that you can send us home in only a few minutes."

The voice did not answer quickly. "Why do you wish this? As I have explained, you are not personally on trial. It has been arranged to let you live."

"We know. We'd rather be home, that's all—with our people."

Again a tiny hesitation. "It shall be done."

"Are the facts sufficient to permit a decision?"

"Yes."

"What is the decision?"

"This race will be re-examined in a dozen half-deaths of radium. Meanwhile there is danger to it from itself. Against this mischance it will be given assistance. During the probationary period it will be watched closely by Guardian Mother" – the machine trilled the true Vegan name of the Mother Thing—"the cop on that beat, who will report at once any ominous change. In the meantime we wish this race good progress in its long journey upward.

"Let them now be returned forthwith to the space-time whence they came."

XII

I didn't think it was safe to make our atmosphere descent in New Jersey without filing a flight plan. Princeton is near important targets; we might be homed-on by everything up to A-missiles. The Mother Thing got that indulgent chuckle in her song: "*I fancy we can avoid that.*"

She did. She put us down in a side street, sang goodby and was gone. It's not illegal to be out at night in space suits, even carrying a rag dolly. But it's unusual—cops hauled us in. They phoned Peewee's father and in twenty minutes we were in his study, drinking cocoa and talking and eating shredded wheat.

Peewee's mother almost had a fit. While we told our story she kept gasping, "I can't believe it!" until Professor Reisfeld said, "Stop it, Janice. Or go to bed." I don't blame her. Her daughter disappears on the Moon and is given up for dead—then miraculously reappears on Earth. But Professor Reisfeld believed us. The way the Mother Thing had "understanding" he had "acceptance." When a fact came along, he junked theories that failed to match.

He examined Peewee's suit, had her switch on the helmet, shined a light to turn it opaque, all with a little smile. Then he reached for the phone. "Dario must see this."

"At midnight, Kurt?"

"Please, Janice. Armageddon won't wait for office hours."

"Professor Reisfeld?"

"Yes, Kip?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Uh, you may want to see other things first."

"That's impossible."

I took things from Oscar's pockets: two beacons, one for each of us, some metal "paper" covered with equations, two "happy things," and two silvery spheres. We had stopped on Vega IV, spending most of the time under what I suppose was hypnosis while Prof Joe and another professor thing pumped us for what we knew of human mathematics. They hadn't been learning math from us—oh, no! They wanted the language we use in mathematics, from radicals and vectors to those weird symbols in higher physics, so that *they* could teach *us;* the results were on the metal paper.

First I showed Professor Reisfeld the beacons. "The Mother Thing's beat now includes us. She says to use these if we need her. She'll usually be close by—a thousand light-years at most. But even if she is far away, she'll come."

"Oh." He looked at mine. It was neater and smaller than the one she haywired on Pluto. "Do we dare take it apart?"

"Well, it's got a lot of power tucked in it. It might explode."

"Yes, it might." He handed it back, looking wistful.

A "happy thing" can't be explained. They look like those little abstract sculptures you feel as well as look at. Mine was like obsidian but warm and not hard; Peewee's was more like jade. The surprise comes when you touch one to your head. I had Professor Reisfeld do so and he looked awed—the Mother Thing is all around you and you feel warm and safe and *understood.*

He said, "She loves you. The message wasn't for me. Excuse me."

"Oh, she loves *you,* too."

"Eh?"

"She loves everything small and young and fuzzy and helpless. That's why she's a 'mother thing.'"

I didn't realize how it sounded. But he didn't mind. "You say she is a police officer?"

"Well, she's more of a juvenile welfare officer—this is a slum neighborhood we're in, backward and pretty tough. Sometimes she has to do things she doesn't like. But she's a good cop and somebody has to do nasty jobs. She doesn't shirk them."

"I'm sure she wouldn't."

"Would you like to try it again?"

"Do you mind?"

"Oh, no, it doesn't wear out."

He did and got that warm happy look. He glanced at Peewee, asleep with her face in her cereal. "I need not have worried about my daughter, between the Mother Thing—and you."

"It was a team," I explained. "We couldn't have made it without Peewee. The kid's got guts."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Too much, sometimes."

"Other times you need that extra. These spheres are recorders. Do you have a tape recorder, Professor?"

"Certainly, sir." We set it up and let a sphere talk to it. I wanted a tape because the spheres are one-shot—the molecules go random again. Then I showed him the metal paper. I had tried to read it, got maybe two inches into it, then just recognized a sign here and there. Professor Reisfeld got halfway down the first page, stopped. "I had better make those phone calls."

At dawn a sliver of old Moon came up and I tried to judge where Tombaugh Station was. Peewee was asleep on her Daddy's couch, wrapped in his bathrobe and clutching Madame Pompadour. He had tried to carry her to bed but she had wakened and become very, very difficult, so he put her down. Professor Reisfeld chewed an empty pipe and listened to my sphere whispering softly to his recorder. Occasionally he darted a question at me and I'd snap out of it.

Professor Giomi and Dr. Bruck were at the other end of the study, filling a blackboard, erasing and filling it again, while they argued over that metal paper. Geniuses are common at the Institute for Advanced Study but those two wouldn't be noticed anywhere; Bruck looked like a truck-driver and Giomi like an excited Iunio. They both had that OK-I-get-you that Professor Reisfeld had. They were excited but Dr. Bruck showed it only by a tic in his face, which Peewee's Daddy told me was a guarantee of nervous breakdowns—not for Bruck, for other physicists.

Two mornings later we were still there. Professor Reisfeld had shaved; the others hadn't. I napped and once I took a shower. Peewee's Daddy listened to recordings—he was now replaying Peewee's tape. Now and then Bruck and Giomi called him over, Giomi almost hysterical and Bruck stolid. Professor Reisfeld always asked a question or two, nodded and came back to his chair. I don't think he could work that math—but he could soak up results and fit them with other pieces.

I wanted to go home once they were through with me but Professor Reisfeld said please stay; the Secretary General of the Federated Free Nations was coming.

I stayed. I didn't call home because what was the use in upsetting them? I would rather have gone to New York City to meet the Secretary General, but Professor Reisfeld had invited him here. I began to realize that anybody really important would

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

come if Professor Reisfeld asked him.

Mr. van Duivendijk was slender and tall. He shook hands and said, "I understand that you are Dr. Samuel C. Russell's son."

"You know my father, sir?"

"I met him years ago, at the Hague."

Dr. Bruck turned—he had barely nodded at the Secretary General. "You're Sam Russell's boy?"

"Oh, you know him, too?"

"Of course. 'On the Statistical Interpretation of Imperfect Data.' Brilliant." He turned back and got more chalk on his sleeve. I hadn't known that Dad had written such a thing, nor suspected that he knew the top man in the Federation. Sometimes I think Dad is eccentric.

Mr. van D. waited until the double-domes came up for air, then said, "You have something, gentlemen?"

"Yeah," said Bruck.

"Superb!" agreed Giomi.

"Such as?"

"Well . . ." Dr. Bruck pointed at a line of chalk. "That says you can damp out a nuclear reaction at a distance."

"What distance?"

"How about ten thousand miles? Or must you do it from the Moon?"

"Oh, ten thousand miles is sufficient, I imagine."

"You could do it from the Moon," Giomi interrupted, "if you had enough power. Magnificent!"

"It is," agreed van Duivendijk. "Anything else?"

"What do you want?" demanded Bruck. "Egg in your suds?"

"Well?"

"See that seventeenth line? It may mean anti-gravity, I ain't promising. Or, if you rotate ninety degrees, this unstable Latin thinks it's time travel."

"It *is!*"

"If he's right, the power needed is a fair-sized star—so forget it." Bruck stared at hen's tracks. "A new approach to matter conversion—possibly. How about a power pack for your vest pocket that turns out more ergs than the Brisbane reactor?"

"This can be done?"

"Ask your grandson. It won't be soon." Bruck scowled.

"Dr. Bruck, why are you unhappy?" asked Mr. van D.

Bruck scowled harder. "Are you goin' to make this 'Top Secret'? I don't like classifying mathematics. It's shameful."

I batted my ears. I had explained to the Mother Thing about "classified" and I think I shocked her. I said that the FFN *had* to have secrets for survival, just like Three Galaxies. She couldn't see it. Finally she had said that it wouldn't make any difference in the long run. But I had worried because while I don't

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

like science being "secret," I don't want to be reckless, either.

Mr. van D. answered, "I don't like secrecy. But I have to put up with it."

"I knew you would say that!"

"Please. Is this a U.S. government project?"

"Eh? Of course not."

"Nor a Federation one. Very well, you've shown me some equations. I can't tell you not to publish them. They're yours."

Bruck shook his head. "Not ours." He pointed at me. "His."

"I see." The Secretary General looked at me. "I am a lawyer, young man. If you wish to publish, I see no way to stop you."

"Me? It's not mine. I was just—well, a messenger."

"You seem to have the only claim. Do you wish this published? Perhaps with all your names?" I got the impression that he wanted it published.

"Well, sure. But the third name shouldn't be mine; it should be—" I hesitated. You can't put a bird song down as author. "—uh, make it 'Dr. M. Thing.'"

"Who is he?"

"She's a Vegan. But we could pretend it's a Chinese name."

The Secretary General stayed on, asking questions, listening to tapes. Then he made a phone call—to the Moon. I knew it could be done, I never expected to see it. "Van Duivendijk here . . . yes, the Secretary General. Get the Commanding General. . . . Jim? . . . This connection is terrible. . . . Jim, you sometimes order practice maneuvers . . . My call is unofficial but you might check a valley—" He turned to me; I answered quickly. "—a valley just past the mountains east of Tombaugh Station. I haven't consulted the Security Council; this is between friends. But if you go into that valley I very strongly suggest that it be done in force, with all weapons. It may have snakes in it. The snakes will be camouflaged. Call it a hunch. Yes, the kids are fine and so is Beatrix. I'll phone Mary and tell her I talked with you."

The Secretary General wanted my address. I couldn't say when I would be home because I didn't know how I would get there—I meant to hitchhike but didn't say so. Mr. van D.'s eyebrows went up. "I think we owe you a ride home. Eh, Professor?"

"That would not be overdoing it."

"Russell, I heard on your tape that you plan to study engineering—with a view to space."

"Yes, sir. I mean, 'Yes, Mr. Secretary.'"

"Have you considered studying law? Many engineers want to go into space—not many lawyers. But the Law goes everywhere. A man skilled in space law and metalaw would be in a strong position."

"Why not both?" suggested Pee-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wee's Daddy. "I deplore this modern overspecialization.'

"That's an idea," agreed Mr. van Duivendijk. "He could then write his own terms."

I was about to say I should stick to electronics—when suddenly I knew what I wanted to do. "Uh, I don't think I could handle both."

"Nonsense!" Professor Reisfeld said severely.

"Yes, sir. But I want to make space suits that work better. I've got some ideas."

"Mmm, that's mechanical engineering. And many other things, I imagine. But you'll need an M.E. degree." Professor Reisfeld frowned. "As I recall your tape, you passed College Boards but hadn't been accepted by a good school." He drummed his desk. "Isn't that silly, Mr. Secretary? The lad goes to the Magellanic Clouds but can't go to the school he wants."

"Well, Professor? You pull while I push?"

"Yes. But wait." Professor Reisfeld picked up his phone. "Susie, get me the President of M.I.T. I know it's a holiday; I don't care if he's in Bombay or in bed; get him. Good girl." He put down the phone. "She's been with the Institute five years and on the University switchboard before that. She'll get him."

I felt embarrassed and excited. M.I.T.—anybody would jump at the chance. But tuition alone would stun you. I tried to explain that I didn't have the money. "I'll work the rest of this school year and next summer—I'll save it."

The phone rang. "Reisfeld here. Hi, Oppie. At the class reunion you made me promise to tell you if Bruck's tic started bothering him. Hold onto your chair; I timed it at twenty-one to the minute. That's a record. Slow down; you won't send *anybody*, unless I get my pound of flesh. If you start your lecture on academic freedom and 'the right to know,' I'll hang up and call Berkeley. I can do business there—and I know I can here, over on the campus. Not much, just a four-year scholarship, tuition and fees. Don't scream at me; use your discretionary fund—or make it a wash deal in bookkeeping. You're over twenty-one; you can do arithmetic. Nope, no hints. Buy a pig in a poke or your radiation lab won't be on it. Did I say 'radiation lab'? I meant the entire physical science department. You can flee to South America, don't let me sway you. What? I'm an embezzler, too. Hold it." Professor Reisfeld said to me, "You applied for M.I.T.?"

"Yes, sir, but—"

"He's in your application files, 'Clifford C. Russell.' Send the letter to his home and have the head of your team fetch my copy. Oh, a broad team, headed by a mathematical physicist – Farley, probably; he's got imagination. This is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the biggest thing since the apple konked Sir Isaac. Sure, I'm a blackmailer, and you are a chair warmer and a luncheon speaker. When are you returning to the academic life? Best to Beulah. 'By."

He hung up. "That's settled. Kip, the one thing that confuses me is why those worm-faced monsters wanted *me*."

I didn't know how to say it. He had told me only the day before that he had been correlating odd data: unidentified sightings, unexpected opposition to space travel, many things that did not fit. Such a man is likely to get answers—and be listened to. If he had a weakness, it was modesty—which he hadn't passed on to Peewee. If I told him that invaders from outer space had grown nervous over his intellectual curiosity, he would have pooh-poohed it. So I said, "They never told us, sir. But they thought you were important enough to grab."

"Some mistake. Now if it had been the Secretary here—"

Mr. van Duivendijk stood up. "Curt, I won't waste time listening to nonsense. Russell, I'm glad your schooling is arranged. If you need me, call me."

When he was gone, I tried to thank Professor Reisfeld. "I meant to pay my way, sir. I would have earned the money before school opens again."

"In less than three weeks?"

"I mean the rest of this year and—"

"Waste a year? No."

"But I already—" I looked past his head at green leaves in their garden. "Professor . . . what date is it?"

"Why, Labor Day, of course."

(*"—forthwith to the space-time whence they came."*)

Professor Reisfeld flipped water in my face. "Feeling better?"

"I—I guess so. We were gone for *weeks*."

"Kip, you've been through too much to let this shake you. You can talk it over with the stratosphere twins"—he gestured at Giomi and Bruck—"but you won't understand it. At least I didn't. Why not assume that a hundred and sixty-seven thousand light-years leaves room for Tennessee windage amounting to only a hair's breadth of a fraction of one per cent? Especially when the method doesn't properly use space-time at all?"

When I left, Mrs. Reisfeld kissed me and Peewee blubbered and had Madame Pompadour say goodby to Oscar, who was in the back seat because the Professor was driving me to the airport.

On the way he remarked, "Peewee is fond of you."

"Uh, I hope so."

"And you? Or am I impertinent?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Am I fond of Peewee? I certainly am! She saved my life four or five times." Peewee could drive you nuts. But she was gallant and loyal and smart—and had guts.

"You won a life-saving medal or two yourself."

I thought about it. "Seems to me I fumbled everything I tried. But I had help and an awful lot of luck." I shivered at how luck alone had kept me out of the soup. Real soup.

"'Luck' is a question-begging word," he answered. "You spoke of the 'amazing luck' that you were listening when my daughter called for help. That wasn't luck."

"Huh? I mean, 'Sir?'"

"Why were you on that frequency? Because you were wearing a space suit. Why were you wearing it? Because you were determined to space. When a spaceship called, you answered. If that is luck, then it is luck every time a batter hits a ball. Kip, 'good luck' follows careful preparation; 'bad luck' comes from sloppiness. You convinced a court older than Man himself that you and your kind were worth saving. Was that mere chance?"

"Uh . . . fact is, I got mad and almost ruined things. I was tired of being shoved around."

"The best things in history are accomplished by people who get 'tired of being shoved around.'" He frowned. "I'm glad you like Peewee. She is about twenty years old intellectually and six emotionally; she usually antagonizes people. So I'm glad she has gained a friend who is smarter than she is."

My jaw dropped. "But, Professor, Peewee is much smarter than I am. She runs me ragged."

He glanced at me. "She's run me ragged for years—and I'm not stupid. Don't downgrade yourself, Kip."

"It's the truth."

"So? The greatest mathematical psychologist of our time, a man who always wrote his own ticket even to retiring when it suited him—very difficult, when a man is in demand—this man married his star pupil. I doubt if their offspring is less bright than my own child."

I had to untangle this to realize that he meant *me*. Then I didn't know what to say. How many kids really know their parents? Apparently I didn't.

He went on, "Peewee is a handful, even for me. Here's the airport. When you return for school, please plan on visiting us. Thanksgiving, too, if you will—no doubt you'll go home Christmas."

"Oh, thank you, sir. I'll be back."

"Good."

"Uh, about Peewee—if she gets too difficult, well, you've got the beacon. The Mother Thing can handle her."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Mmm, that's a thought."

"Peewee tries to get around her but she never does. Oh—I almost forgot. Whom may I tell? Not about Peewee. About the whole thing."

"Isn't that obvious?"

"Sir?"

"Tell anybody anything. You won't very often. Almost no one will believe you."

I rode home in a courier jet—those things go *fast*. Professor Reisfeld had insisted on lending me ten dollars when he found out that I had only a dollar sixty-seven, so I got a haircut at the bus station and bought two tickets to Centerville to keep Oscar out of the luggage compartment; he might have been damaged. The best thing about that scholarship was that now I needn't ever sell him—not that I would.

Centerville looked mighty good, from elms overhead to the chuck-holes under foot. The driver stopped near our house because of Oscar; he's clumsy to carry. I went to the barn and racked Oscar, told him I'd see him later, and went in the back door.

Mother wasn't around, Dad was in his study. He looked up from reading. "Hi, Kip."

"Hi, Dad."

"Nice trip?"

"Uh, I didn't go to the lake."

"I know. Dr. Reisfeld phoned—he briefed me thoroughly."

"Oh. It was a nice trip—on the whole." I saw that he was holding a volume of the Britannica, open to "Magellanic Clouds."

He followed my glance. "I've never seen them," he said regretfully. "I had a chance once, but I was busy except one cloudy night."

"When was that, Dad?"

"In South America, before you were born."

"I didn't know you had been there."

"It was a cloak-and-daggerish government job—not one to talk about. Are they beautiful?"

"Uh, not exactly." I got another volume, turned to "Nebulae" and found the Great Nebula of Adromeda. "*Here* is beauty. That's the way *we* look."

Dad sighed. "It must be lovely."

"It is. I'll tell you all about it. I've got a tape, too."

"No hurry. You've had quite a trip. Three hundred and thirty-three thousand light-years—is that right?"

"Oh, no, just half that."

"I meant the round trip."

"Oh. But we didn't come back the same way."

"Eh?"

"I don't know how to put it, but in these ships, if you make a jump, *any* jump, the short way back is the long way 'round. You go straight ahead until you're back where you started. Well, not 'straight' since space is curved—

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but straight as can be. That returns everything to zero."

"A cosmic great-circle?"

"That's the idea. All the way around in a straight line."

"Mmm . . ." He frowned thoughtfully. "Kip, how far is it, around the Universe? The red-shift limit?"

I hesitated. "Dad, I asked—but the answer didn't mean anything." (The Mother Thing had said, "How can there be 'distance' where there is *nothing*?") "It's not a distance; it's more of a condition. I didn't *travel* it; I just *went*. You don't go *through*, you slide past."

Dad looked pensive. "I should know not to ask a mathematical question in words."

I was about to suggest that Dr. Bruck could help when Mother sang out: "Hello, my darlings!"

For a split second I thought I was hearing the Mother Thing.

She kissed Dad, she kissed me. "I'm glad you're home, dear."

"Uh—" I turned to Dad.

"She knows."

"Yes," Mother agreed in a warm indulgent tone, "and I don't mind where my big boy goes as long as he comes home safely. I know you'll go as far as you want to." She patted my cheek. "And I'll always be proud of you. Myself, I've just been down to the corner for another chop."

Next morning was Tuesday, I went to work early. As I expected, the fountain was a mess. I put on my white jacket and got cracking. Mr. Charton was on the phone; he hung up and came over. "Nice trip, Kip?"

"Very nice, Mr. Charton."

"Kip, there's something I've been meaning to say. Are you still anxious to go to the Moon?"

I was startled. Then I decided that he couldn't know.

Well, I hadn't seen the Moon, hardly, I was still eager—though not as much in a hurry. "Yes, sir. But I'm going to college first."

"That's what I mean. I— Well, I have no children. If you need money, say so."

He had hinted at pharmacy school—but never this. And only last night Dad had told me that he had bought an education policy for me the day I was born —he had been waiting to see what I would do on my own. "Gee, Mr. Charton, that's mighty nice of you!"

"I approve of your wanting an education."

"Uh, I've got things about lined up, sir. But I might need a loan some day."

"Or not a loan. Let me know." He bustled away, plainly fussed.

I worked in a warm glow, sometimes touching the happy thing, tucked away in a pocket. Last night I had let Mother and Dad put it to their foreheads. Mother had cried; Dad said solemnly, "I begin to understand, Kip." I de-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cided to let Mr. Charton try it when I could work around to it. I got the fountain shining and checked the air conditioner. It was OK.

About midafternoon Ace Quiggle came in, plunked himself down. "Hi, Space Pirate! What do you hear from the Galactic Overlords? Yuk yuk yukkity yuk!"

What would he have said to a straight answer? I touched the happy thing and said, "What'll it be, Ace?"

"My usual, of course, and snap it up!"

"A choc malt?"

"You know that. Look alive, Junior! Wake up and get hep to the world around you."

"Sure thing, Ace." There was no use fretting about Ace; his world was as narrow as the hole between his ears, no deeper than his own hog wallow. Two girls came in; I served them cokes while Ace's malt was in the mixer. He leered at them. "Ladies, do you know Commander Comet here?" One of them tittered; Ace smirked and went on:

"I'm his manager. You want hero-ing done, see me. Commander, I've been thinking about that ad you're goin' to run."

"Huh?"

"Keep your ears open. *'Have Space Suit—Will Travel,'* that doesn't say enough. To make money out of that silly clown suit, we got to have oomph. So we add: *'Bug-Eyed Monsters Exterminated—World Saving a Specialty—Rates on Request.'* Right?"

I shook my head. "No, Ace."

"S'matter with you? No head for business?"

"Let's stick to the facts. I don't charge for world saving and don't do it to order; it just happens. I'm not sure I'd do it on purpose—with *you* in it."

Both girls tittered, Ace scowled. "Smart guy, eh? Don't you know that the customer is always right?

"Always?"

"He certainly is. See that you remember it. Hurry up that malt!"

"Yes, Ace." I reached for it; he shoved 35 cents at me; I pushed it back. "This is on the house."

I threw it in his face.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It would be impudent, perhaps, for an editor to suggest that the following story ranks with such acknowledged masterpieces by the same author as How Beautiful With Shoes *or* Blue Murder *or, for that matter, many others under a Steele byline that fill and overflow The Best Short Stories of the Year collections. Whatever admiring thoughts an editor might have about the special distinction of this piece, he would be wise to keep them to himself. But surely, he will be pardoned for drawing a parallel in exactly so many words between such heroic contests as Thor's drinking bout with the Sea in Jotunheim and the utterly fantastic, utterly hilarious golf match between Mr. Bronson and the redoubtable Colonel Boogy (Bogey? Bogy? Bogie?)!!!*

THE BOGEY MAN

by WILBUR DANIEL STEELE

I AM NOT A SUPERSTITIOUS man; I do not believe easily. I do not believe that seeing the new moon over my right shoulder is going to affect my destiny in any way or that toads give warts. When I hit my shaving-mirror with an elbow and knocked it off the bureau and cracked it that morning, all it did, it made me mad. I never thought of it again until around noon at South Station when, at the gate to the Cape Cod train, I discovered that what I had just walked under was a ladder, where some men were fixing an arclight. What ho—next for a black cat, I grinned to myself. That's all the effect.

The reason I was going down Cape that November afternoon was to have a look at a pond a gun-club I represent (legally—I don't shoot) was thinking of leasing. At Shorewich, end of nowhere, I was offered a car for hire, but I distrust sand roads and wanted the exercise anyway. This I was to repent when, two hours later, going around and around the reedy perimeter of that pool lost in the moorlands, trying to decide where it was I had *started* to go around, a fog-bank from the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Atlantic met a storm-cloud from the Bay and darkness gathered and rain fell.

If it was wilderness, it was far from trackless; sheep must have been run there, for paths went every way. There came a time in the weeping dusk when it was better to choose one of these rather than none, if only on faith. And when I had done this, as soon as my feet were on it I knew somehow it was the right one. And then this cat—one of those beasts which beastly summer-people will insist upon abandoning—this big, gaunt, green-eyed black cat loped out of the huckleberry cover and across in front of me, and it was dismal dark overhead, and a dribble of cold rain was down my coat-collar, and I knew of a sudden it was not the right path at all. So I turned back and took another, and that was how at last I came to the putting-green.

How much of earth's surface I had covered, floundering in morass, high-hopping across brushed acres, while gloom of storm gave way little by little to that of hidden night, and a wind arose and howled down a hundred valleys of the moorland all naked and all alike, I cannot say. I don't want to think. I only know that when, climbing a steep rise covered with wiregrass, I felt my feet at large on a smooth flatness and a lean phantom walking toward me turned into a bamboo pin with a flag on it, I only know I said to myself it wasn't so, any part of it. And then, though I am not superstitious, I wished I had taken more care throughout the day.

I needed comfort, and it was a little thing that gave me it. On the neighboring tee stood a tee-box, and on the tee-box, when I went and hunkered down to peer, it said "No. 12, 495, Par 4," in faded, peeling paint. But it was not this pigment of nowadays that warmed me, but a better one of other years beneath it (was even the paint of those years, then, stouter-thewed and truer-hearted?). For there in palimpsest under the flaking "Par 4" loomed the wraith of a "Bogey 5," and some of the cold went out of my heart, and "Aha!" I cried, not aloud, but in my mind. "Excellent man!" I exulted saltily, "Good old Colonel Bogey, they'll find it hard to kill you with a mere paint-brush, won't they, damn their eyes!"

I sat on the edge of the box and mused, insensible to rivers down my neck. Memories of simple-hearted, homely, scrubby links (not yet manicured and mistitled "courses") came to me; memories of the days when only those worthy of loafing were worthy of golfing, and when, when you shouldered your bag for an afternoon alone, you haled along out with you no such dehumanized,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

exanimate, super-infallible, billion-dollar, chrome-steel, rubber-cushioned gadget as a modern Par, to tramp and philosophize with, swear at, and shoot against, but this very most human old codger of myth, this tweed-and-briar-smelling Colonel of Foot, retired, with his little gimlet-grey eyes (I've always felt sure), his blistery red ears, and a complaint of the liver contracted in the Indian Service (I'm certain)—Bogey.

Ah, you (I mused) you sad, mechanical children of golf-in-quantity-production who will never know what it was to match wrists and epithets with the genial, peppery old goblin, so easy to out-drive with a well walloped ball (except that *his* would be down the middle), so satisfyingly testy about it when your brassie second to the pin lay certain to beat his pedestrian two putts if you were half as good as a blind cripple in getting your one down, and then (when you muffed it after all) so wryly, so dryly, so diabolically — well, you who've never had to hear the still, small chuckle of Colonel Bogey in your soul when you lifted your head in mid-putt—

So I was cogitating, sodden and sentimental, when the squawk of an astonished seabird brought me back to a realization of how silly I must look even to a gull, and it was night and wet and I was nowhere, and I'd better be doing something about it. And immediately, as if to point a moral, I discerned far off between the layers of the rain a tiny glimmer, and I went that way.

Somebody said "Come in," and opening the door I entered. It was, as I had suspected, a clubhouse, and by the mixed light from an oil-lamp and a base-burner at which a man, nearly as soaked as I, was trying to dry himself, I perceived this to be the gentlemen's locker-room.

I said, "It's wet," and the man said, "It's wet."

"I must beg your pardon for intruding," I began, but he stopped me with a deprecating gesture—he seemed a deprecating sort all told; weedy-built, narrow-shouldered, out-odded in life's battle I dared say, and the seat of his trousers growing shiny as they dried—he stopped my apology as he made room by the stove door: "I was just going to beg yours, sir; I thought probably you belonged."

"Then you too—"

"I was collecting sea-shells on the shore out there—that's one of my hobbies, shell collecting. And then when it—when I—I'm afraid I'm catching my—catching my death." He tried to sneeze.

"Ah, so? Well, what about me? Why don't I have a shot too?"

"Shot?" His eyes avoided mine. "I myself don't drink."

I got my nose nearer, "You're

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a liar. Where is it?"

He had, at this time, no spunk. From beneath a bench he produced a nearly full bottle, which I couldn't name till I tried it.

"Not Scotch," I concluded, drying my lips.

"Perhaps you're right." He dried his on his sleeve. "It's not mine. I found it in that locker yonder. That's another of my hobbies, key-collecting. I've a great lot of keys."

Little as I liked the fellow, I felt so much better now that I chuckled, called him a burglar, pledged him moderately, and shook him by the hand. "My hobby is coin-collecting—all I can, ha-ha. J. G. Bronson, that's me."

"Boogy here. Your good health, Mr. Bronson."

"Here's same to you, Mr.—Boogy, did you say?" I had my mouth open to kid it—sure it wasn't Bogey, hey?—when his mouth fell open too and his eyes bulged. And me, something like a wind ran prickling up my back hair.

The sound, whatever it was, came from nowhere, and from everywhere, overhead, underfoot, from all the thin partitions of that hulk in wilderness. And it sounded, along with the rain and wind, like a death-moan.

"Good God! What's that?" My head went round and round.

Maybe these last few drinks had done it; the mild man lost his temper. "Don't ask *me!*" He got a bit of egg-crate from the pile by the stove and threw it in, to crackle and brighten. "I tell you I'm here till this storm's over, and she's not going to drive me out with any damn caterwaulings, and she *is* going to bring me something to eat!"

"She? Who? Eat? What?"

For answer he took a board and beat upon a wall with an exhibition of choler which astounded me at the time (I have smiled since, bitterly). He ceased not until a latch clicked in the deep of the room and there appeared a female, vast, pallid and in a bad way. On a plate she bore a dessicated sandwich, rocked like a spent mariner on a doomed ship on a lee shore. Her thin lips flapped.

"Coming, sir, coming, coming, yes sir, here y'are, sir."

I wheeled on the dastard. "Boogy, you ought to be ashamed!"

Somewhat red of face, he sat down with the plate in his lap and pestered the sandwich around with a thumb, while the lips of the sufferer flapped on.

"Doin' the best I can—club's closed up for the season—don't calculate to expect the gentlemen—doin' the best I can—"

"Madam," I found my voice at last, "you're ill!"

"Mortal." It was a mortal groan.

"My God—you're here *alone!*"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I am a widow woman."

"And you, like this, and no one —" I turned my eyes aghast upon the despicable Boogy. "—has offered to go get you a doctor?"

"No sir, no doctor for me, sir—it's far and they charge and I don't hold with 'em anyway—and —Ooohhhh!" I perceived her wrapping her large arms, as if trying to hold herself together. "Ooohhh, sir, if it's God's will, no doctor could help me anyhow." With that, tight in her own arms, as it were, she carried herself hurriedly away.

I could have killed Boogy and he knew it; the white of his eye was ingratiating as with one hand he offered me the dusty shard of bread and ham and sought to relieve me of the bottle with the other.

"I'm hungry, but you're hungrier, man; I'll just make a nip of that do me."

"Like fun you will! Eat, and pull yourself together. The idea! You're not going and getting a doctor here long ago."

"Why don't *you*?"

I hearkened to the wet gale, and I nearly choked.

"Why you — you — You were here first, and you're warm and dried out."

"You're not, so it wouldn't make the difference."

I couldn't talk to this rat; couldn't trust myself. Rolling the empty bottle under a bench I longed for something inanimate to vent violence upon. In the open locker which he had vandalized I espied a driver. I yanked it forth; gave it a few savage waggles. But wait, hey, this was some club! Regarding a hypothetical ball on the floor I smacked it a mile, oh so sweetly.

"Don't jump at it, Bronson."

I gaped, I stared. "Did I hear you rightly to say—?"

"Don't jump at the ball. Let the club-head do some of it, man."

"Oh? So?" I had to smile (the little rat!). "You play?"

"Well—uh—that *is*—but *you* play a *lot*, I can see."

"Oh — occasionally — used to. Pretty rusty just now."

"I haven't had a club in my hands for—"

"I haven't had a club in my hands for—" We both stopped there.

The groan saved the situation. Through the frail walls, mortaller and awfuller than ever, it came and got us. Got me, anyway.

"Listen, Boogy, in the merest common human decency—" I fixed a glare upon him, and it was queer, the first hint I had of the fellow's duplicity. Very distinctly for a moment I saw two of him, two heads, four legs astraddle of two benches there. "Pull yourself together!" I cried. "One of us, you or I, is getting that woman a doctor, hear me?"

"Wait." There had come a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

curious, preoccupied glitter to his eye. "I'll tell you what? We'll get us a ball and a couple of putters, and I'll putt you for it, Bronson, see which one goes."

I went hot, and, I imagine, crimson. It was eerie. Who had told this wretch about my game, whose one weakness, if it has one—

"Putting!" I sneered. I waggled the driver luxuriously. "Putting is something I can take or leave alone. Give me the long game, the strong game. Old men putt." I was sorry the instant I said it. For he was old. That, I now realized, was what was so weedy and mean and exasperating about him. He was an old, old man. Confused (partly too because the outer groans grew louder) I did a little shadow-driving, swinging the wood in the long, unhurried arc which has made me (people tell me) something of a terror on the tee.

"That's better; you're gettin' it now." Boogy coughed meagerly. "But, man, if you'd only take it off your left foot more."

No, I would *not* lose my temper. I would not even hear.

"On my word, Bronson, you'd add twenty yards. I never drove three hundred in my life till the day I changed—"

"You? Three hundred?" It wasn't nice, the gaze I ran over his paltry skin and bones. He tickled me, though. I swished thoughtfully. "Oh, I don't know. So long as I can click off my three-twenty from this old stance . . ."

I saw him writhing, agonizing to call me a liar. "From a high tee—high on a high hill—with a gale o' wind behind ye and a baked-up fairway, me-laddie—once in your lifetime, maybe, lad."

The man angered me. "The matter with you is, you're drunk. You're so plastered you can't even pronou'ce English any more."

"From a verra high tee on a verra high hill, one lone time."

Now (partly because that poor woman was yelling) I yelled. "Boogy, if I can't take you out there and outdrive you by twenty yards, I—I'll go get the doctor gladly."

He laughed a small, dry laugh. "When, laddie? The morrow?"

"*Now!* Come look." I dragged him to a window where my eye had caught a greenish sheen. No wonder the woman had seemed so loud in the house; out of doors, while we argued, the wind had shifted and taken the wrack with it and died, and a moon at the full, an hour high above an ocean, whitened the night with a washed, unholy whiteness.

Boogy sighed. "Man, it could be done. Twenty yards, you said?"

"Though it's more like to be fifty I'll outdrive you."

"Man, man!" A gloat, a greed, known to golf alone. He went

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

away quickly and it was well he did; otherwise I must have kicked him. I don't mind golf, but there are other things after all for a sensitive man to take joy of; such things as a wave-crest breaking in a snowy thread on a sea blackened by moonlight, or moorgrass carpeting a cliff with a nap of diamonds, or (nearer yet) the slightly undulating, faintly winter-bitten velvet of an eighteenth green — a good green — a good, sporty green for a man to come home on, with five or six half-dollar syndicates tied up in the kind of rainbow putt you'ld have to make if you had the bad luck to lie on the high side . . .

Something heavy, leathery and fat was thrust under my arm.

"Man, man! You to better me twenty yards. Lost ball, lost drive."

I looked down at the bag of clubs, of which he had the like.

"What's the idea, all these? For one tee-shot."

"Best just fetch 'em along, lad, in case."

He did not show me his eyes as he said it; indeed he was for the door, gnome-size under his stolen kit, me weak-witted at his heels. For surely, you will say, I ought at least to have begun to fathom him and his unholy purposes. Be it said for me however, my mind was more luminous than it was clear at the time (I'd had a few hookers, remember) and I was otherwise distracted by the noise of the woman out back, whom I was trying to help.

I have never seen the like of that first tee, hung on a cliff's edge high above a broil of surf, for beauty and peril. And the fairway before it, a sweep of silver toward cloudy bunkers on a moor-rise, had an eerie loveliness that night to take a man's breath away.

Nothing could take Boogy's. "Your bet, your honor, laddy-me-lad."

"Like fun! If I'm beating you, give me something to shoot at."

"The woman will ay be dead, before you'll be gettin' around to—"

"Quit using silly words!" I wouldn't argue. Teeing my ball moderately on sand, I addressed it without fiddle-faddle and with a nice pivot and a perfect backswing gave it all I had.

"Damn!" That went not alone for the tricks of moonshine but for the stentorian silence of the witness. I hadn't altogether missed the ball; it had catacornered off a few rods before it died.

I gave place to the adversary. As he addressed his teed ball fussily, from the most preposterous stance it has ever been my fortune to behold, again I could think of nothing but a gnome. A little moon-colored beastie that strangled a grunt as it swung a towering stroke.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I shall never forget his face then; he had missed it a mile. Since he said nothing, I said nothing. Putting a heel to the teed ball I paced the distance to my own.

"Twenty yards plus, Mister Boogy. Bad luck."

"Yerself." His face was a mask, pin-eyed, red-eared. "Astray out there? Did ye never hear of the hypotenuse of a triangle? Still on the tee here I lie but little further from the green we're shootin' for; I wouldna give ye seven yards the better, *on the line.*"

I put my fists on my hips, spread my feet, stared at him. He had the gall to seem to deliberate, then: "I'll tell ye, lad; we lie alike, a stroke each, eh? We'll play out the hole. That's fair."

"You teed up, and me in the rough!" I withered him by disdaining to argue. "All right, my dear sir. You're away."

This time the devil somehow really got it off. I couldn't see the flight, but it sounded clean. As for me, my lie wasn't too bad after all, still a workable brassie. The moon drowned my eyes as I swung, topped it again, and watched it into a sand trap up the way. Boogy observed that I'd have been wiser with an iron. I observed that it would be time for him to talk when he had located his drive.

"I shall find it. Strike the wee ball true and ye needna worry."

"Look, Boogy. I told you that bottle wasn't Scotch, so if you will kindly forget the highlands and try hill-billy for a while. Hear?"

"I was simply remarkin'—and no offense meant—hit the ball true and the ball goes true. Wait and see."

I got out of the trap expertly and lay up toward the bunker that stood a battlement against the sky, guarding the green. A nice pitch should put me on in four, not so bad by moonlight. But hey! A good pitch would put him on in three—I observed him looking for his drive, his second, just thereabouts.

Thereabouts, but where? He began to wag a head, squint an eye, peruse with a furtive uneasiness the rain-jewelled, moon-devilled sward. I refrained from whooping or even chortling; contented myself with remarking that he had five minutes to find it. In the meantime, if he didn't mind, I would shoot.

Next to a singing drive there's nothing for joy like a nice fat mashie-niblick for a pin. First and last, that towering pitch was the one shot my eye actually followed through; saw it bounce off the bunker-top onto what, with any justice, should be the green.

"*I'm on!*" My statement turned out more a rebel yell.

Boogy didn't seem to hear. He wasn't getting much of anywhere.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In fact the last I saw of him, as I strode over the top, his circlings had carried him part way back toward the clubhouse. And by that time I wasn't interested, not in him.

It was like this. When I started up, it was in the assurance my ball was on the green. With every step, my imagination took one. Two easy putts, for a moonlit six? Two putts? What of the possibility that one—one long, fairly lucky putt—but wait. By the time I topped the bunker it had become a question whether it would prove so obviously a gi'me that even Boogy must say take-it like a gentleman.

There remained but one step after that. When I had walked down on that green and run my eye over the pale turf everywhere and found no white ball anywhere—and knew then *where it must be*—tiptoed to the pin, pulled the pin out, knelt down, held my breath and felt in the cup—and there was no ball whatsoever in the cup—when this happened, I say, revulsion overcame me and I wept.

It was not for any so small a thing as a hole at golf I wept; it was the whole and heavy total of the world's injustice since the dawn of time. (In the plain fact, of course, it was merely that a share of a bottle of liquor, taken on an empty stomach and manfully denied a while, good and caught up with me now. At liberty to do so, the green got going around me, whirligig, and the moon, split in halves like a fruiting amoeba, around and around the sky, and the sky around me. Me, man, mite, plaything of the insensate elements.)

How long I sat there revolving, mashie-niblick in one hand and pin in the other and tears raining down my cheeks, I cannot say. When Boogy came up and over, curiously swollen with things in his pockets and wearing on his head an object prodigious, shaggy, and to this day unexplained—I can only say it seemed I must have grown quite old.

He took my arm, got me up and eyed me. "What did ye make it in?"

"What in?"

"The hole, man, the hole."

"Oh, the hole. Well, Boogy, I made a four. A par four."

"Where's your ball?"

The way he said it reopened the floodgates. But they were no tears of repining now, but of strong anger. "Well, if that's all I get for holing out the finest hundred yard approach ever seen—and then, just because—because some sneak comes along before I could get here and—and—steals it out of the cup! If *that's* all I get!"

It was extraordinary, the change, with that. Sympathetic, understanding. A crime and a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shame, he called it, and patted my back. He said: "Lookit, mannie, what ye need right now is a wee dram, that's all." And be-dam if he hadn't it on him, a blackish bottle this time, and he explained: "I found the bit, lookin' for more balls."

He was right; I felt immediately better. "More balls?"

"Oceans." He patted bulging pockets. "When I couldna find my—"

"Shay *could not!* And take that damned thing off your head!"

He obeyed, confused, and stuffed it partially in a hip pocket. As he led me by an arm toward the second tee, he recommenced.

"When I could not find my ball, and yours like to be—er—filched—I thocht to—*thought* to mysel', more balls will be wantit before this bit question is decidit. So back to the clubhouse—"

"Question? What question?" I recollected, and reddened. By the way, Boogy, when you were down there, how—how were things?"

"Quiet." He tried to make it casual, but failed.

"Boogy, look at me. What do you mean, quiet?"

"Verra quiet, Bronson. Verra, verra, verra quiet."

I discovered I was already bareheaded, having left my hat somewhere. Not knowing what else to do, I waggled the driver with solemn hands. A sweet club. Its legal owner must have been a man of much my build and temper . . . But here, good God, for shame!

"Poor woman," I said simply. "I'm sorry."

Boogy, failing words, sought a symbol. He started to pour out a libation on the earth, but I stopped that. We weren't Greeks.

"So now," I observed, stooping to try and tee up the ball he had placed in my hand, "there's no reason left for our shooting any more."

He sighed. "And 'tis a bonny hole, this. Give it a look, lad."

It was him I gave the look. "Boogy, if you don't quit talking like—*Take that damned thing off your head!*"

Flushing slightly, he stuffed it in his pocket. Mollified, I caressed with the club-head the neighborhood of the little ball I hadn't the least intention of hitting down the lovely silver fairway inland. Though I could have, a mile.

"And 'twould ha' been your honor, man, the last bein' halfed."

Deliver me from golf nuts! A solemn inspiration came to me.

"Confound it, Boogy! This poor woman. Out-o-the-way spot, practically wilderness. Boogy, there *are* certain attentions that even *savages*—what I mean—ever laid out a body, Boogy? Because one of us is going to have to—"

"Done!" He shone. "And 'twill

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nae be me, lad. Hit the baw'."

I did. A mile. I guess. It was the last I ever saw of it.

Boogy must have been in league with Satan. Not only did he find his drive, but his second shot turned out to be lying on the green, when we found the green, not four feet from the pin. I had to point out, when he rimmed the cup and took a four, that a blind baby girl could have sunk it for a three and a birdie.

"Birdie?" He stood and studied me, wry, wizened jackanapes, his eyes no bigger than gimlet-points, his blistery ears supporting the weight of that mysterious, disreputable, hairy old tam-o'-shanter which nothing we could do seemed capable of keeping off his head at all permanently. "Birdie? Dinna be sae ignorant. What kith ha' I with such?"

I could have known, then and there. But I shut my mind, to defend it. That I was furious helped. To be beaten fairly is one thing; to be pick-pocketed out of two successive holes by luck like that is another.

Still, I resolved to give him one more chance.

"Well, Boogy, old man," I pledged him with the bottle. "I took the first with my four; you've taken this one. All even, eh-what?"

To my astonishment he did not blow up. There was even an eagerness in his: "Ay, we'll just ha' to play anither, me-lad. Come."

The first two holes had been petty pilfering as compared with the one to come, a shorty, one-eighty yards down from a high tee to a heavily trapped green in a hollow. The liquor would seem to have got him too, at this point. Choosing a three-iron he missed his teed ball completely. He did the same with a four-iron. With a mashie then he did connect, a wabbly loft which I'd swear wouldn't carry the green.

I felt released. A fearful weight was lifted. I gloated. "So you *can* miss, eh? Nothing but a lucky bum, and the luck's busted. There goes your three, and this hole is a three. *Yah!*"

He stood and studied me kindly, wistfully, shaking his head. It was queer; for the first time it seemed to me that some fraction of the moon's ray came on through him, the flesh of him not quite flesh.

" 'Twill be in the cup," he stated.

"I have to laugh," said I. And I was the one who was right, when having driven the green's edge, we descended and espied his ball safely top-side—though hardly a yard from the cup, be it said. The poor man looked so troubled, actually humanly troubled, that I couldn't find it in my heart to razz him. As I faced off for my approach putt, and he went off to mind the pin, I heard him muttering to himself: "I dinna, I canna, understand." But when my ball, away across the green, off-line

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and miles too strong, sought and found and caromed his into the damned cup, as Boogy bent to pick it out the human wonder cleared from his face, and only the inhuman sadness remained.

"Listen, you!" I came storming. "You're not going to *take* it."

"The book says ay, lad. 'Tis the cross I bear." My own ball, ten feet distant, he lost no time in batting to me. "A giftie, lad. Anither half. You're doin' brave, Mister Bronson."

On the next hole—or no, it must have been still another, the one where we finally threw the bottle away—but no, no. The hours of that occult, abominable night; the moor-weavings and moon-trippings of that travesty of a noble sport, it were better to forget as nearly as possible. One thing I cannot forget, however, and the shame of me, that in the end I ceased to struggle, ceased to be able to disbelieve. Under that skein of pars of his, each one as preposterously wrought as it was fantastically inevitable, little by little I was robbed of the power of amazement; hang-jawed, wabble-kneed, bog-eyed, I saw myself doomed never to be astounded any more.

As a matter of fact I was wrong. For when, the moon westering and the shadows long, and Boogy all moon and no shadow, we came to the green of a certain longish par-four and found his ball lying at three on the far edge —and when I knew as I minded the pin at his behest, as surely as I knew that that moon would rise another night I knew that that ball would come homing all the way and the cup at my feet would swallow it—I say, when this did *not* happen—when my eyes beheld the pellet lie down and die dead, eight inches short—I was astounded.

It took the form of exaltation. I believe I did some sort of a slow dance, waving the flag and crying, "Yah! Yah!"

"Yah, you faker, you duffer! Can't miss, eh? Well, this time you *have*. And *this* time I'm not putting, so *that's* out. *Yah!*"

He came treading softly. "Missed what, lad?"

"You know damn well; don't try to tell me par isn't four here!"

"Parrr!" A fleer of disdain. "Wha' kith ha' I wi' parr, girt lunkhead, savin' boogy is the like figger—the way 'twould appear to ha' been till here-now on this wee-feeblish links. But here-now we've a hole hard upon five hunderrd yarruds —sure a God-fearin' gowfer's boogy-five—and so stated on the tee-box back yonder, gin ye'd obsairved it, neath the peelin' paint o' these degenrut days."

I stared at the flag. It was so, the No. 12 of my wilderness dusk.

"For a God-fearin' gowfer," he reiterated, chuckling mournfully to himself as he bent to point the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

moral with his putt, had I not stopped him with a bellow.

"Wait, you! I know what you're trying to put over on me, but you can't. Because there's no such person, and you're not him."

He stood and leered. "Why am I na?"

"Because 'Boogy' isn't 'Bogey', damn you!"

"Ay, anciently." He stood and fleered. "In some parts."

He stood and crackled silently, stood and crackled as moonbeams crackle. "Why am I na, wee mannie?" The chuckle in it was all but obscene.

"Because—" I cried, doubling up the fists of my manhood; "Because—" I yelled, broadening my shoulders; "Because you're a myth, and a myth is nobody, and that's that, see? "Because," I screamed, "if you're anybody, then toads give warts, and what's the use of colleges? Because," I sobbed, "if you're anything realler than just hooch on an empty stomach, then a thimbleful of atoms can't run the S.S. Queen Elizabeth across the ocean. And I won't stand for it—not over my dead body I won't stand for it, see?"

The beams he was woven of jiggled like gelatine, and the jiggles were mirth. "Braw lad! How can ye help it, say?"

"I'll tell you how." I narrowed my eyes and lowered and hardened my voice. "You make so much of bogey being a five here, and you being a five, so Boogy is Bogie, Q.E.D. Well, Mister, how do I know you'll be five? How do I know you'll not be six or seven? You haven't made that putt yet."

He looked down at the absurd twenty-incher. He yawned.

"*You haven't made that putt yet.*" The italics were mine.

He shrugged. He sneered quite openly. Bending, he prepared to tap the ball in one-handed. But there some weird sixth sense that is in moon-people told him to unbend and wheel, suspicion in his eyes.

"Gang awa'! Stand awa' from that cup!"

"I'll stand where I damn well please. Go on, 'Colonel,' putt."

An evil, a sly rageful look, twisted the cheese-green countenance.

"Verra weel, but I gie ye warnin'." Again he bent. And after a moment he said to me: "Tak yur great foot off that hole, and do it straightway, gin ye value yur life nae mair than a sparrow's."

"You and who else?" I guffawed. My other great foot then, gaily and heavily, I placed upon his ball.

And now he screeched a ghost-thin screech, the screech of the martinet of Bengal Rifles with his liver biting him.

"I gied ye the warnin' fair," he screeched.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"You and what other fable?" It bent me double.

Indistinct, ethereal, in the corner of one eye, I seemed to see the putter-head glimmering aloft. Distinct, solid, on the top of my cranium, I felt the kiss of iron . . . When I came to, it was broad day.

When I came to, and it was broad day, I was seated on a step of the clubhouse piazza leaning an enormous head (partly bandage) against a pillar. On opening one eye, the first thing I saw was a large, pale, middle-aged woman near me, rocking in a rocker. I reclosed the eye because it hurt, and also because, so, I could remember better.

"I thought you were dead," I remembered her, out loud.

"It always does seem like it's my last, until the soda works."

"How did I come here?"

"I've tried all sorts of doctor truck, and patent truck, and pepsin tablets and soda *mints*, but just plain soda out of the pantry —"

"How did I come here?"

"—though land knows it does take a sufferin' time sometimes, when I've et something . . . You? Oh, you and him, the other gentleman, you come in a little before sun-up. And the way you was walkin', and you with your head bunged, where you fell, I do believe the both of you'd been drinkin'."

I tried opening that eye again, I shut it again.

"Where is he?"

"The other gentleman? He's gone."

"How do you mean, gone?"

"I don't know. It was this way. He says he and you, you'd been some trouble to me, and he wanted to give me something before he left. And when he give it to me, I says, 'Oh, all that? Can't I give you some change back?' And he gets temp'ry and says yes, if I felt that way about it, and I marched in the house, and when I came out with the nickel, why, he wasn't here any longer."

"A nickel?" I got both eyes open and my weight up off the step. "A nickel change, did you say? Whatever did he give you?"

She held it out on a palm. "One single, solitary, shiny dime."

"Shiny" hardly did it justice. I took its thinness between my fingers. It wouldn't have done for matching; which was heads and which tails had long been beyond man's knowing. Finding my wallet I got out a substantial note and put it in her hand.

"May I keep this for *my* change?" My grin was somewhat sickly, I fear. She, it was plain, was feeling better about life.

"And welcome," she said. A mite puzzled.

"I—I have a friend, at Harvard, a numismatist."

"A—?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Numismatist. I'd like him to look this over."

Hooey! As though I needed Harvard help, or any other. Where my road of departure skirted a tidal water I took that pallid wraith of a strangled sixpence and threw it with all my strength out across the reed-beds.

It was no impulsive act, but a reasoned one. I am not a superstitious man, never have been, and don't propose at my time of life to start believing things.

GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE

F&SF has a particularly fine assortment of delightful, intriguing and unusual stories lined up for its fall and winter issues. Just a few of the authors involved are:

CORNELL WOOLRICH

P. G. WODEHOUSE

THEODORE STURGEON

IORIS SEABRIGHT

JUDITH MERRIL

J. T. McINTOSH

FRITZ LEIBER

ZENNA HENDERSON
(a story of the People)

CAROL EMSHWILLER
AVRAM DAVIDSON
ANTHONY BOUCHER
ROBERT ARTHUR

POUL ANDERSON
(a Time Patrol story)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Occasionally a story too, as MacLeish said of a poem, "should not mean, but be."

The Night of Lies

by DAMON KNIGHT

THE DESERT HILLS HUNG DARK OVER the town. It was early evening, and the wind was blowing gently across the long spaces. A cricket struck up its song, out in the darkness somewhere; then another. Down the long twisting streets the purple lights began to glow, like soft witch-fires in the evening. They bathed the weathered false fronts with a magical radiance, filled the empty windows and the dusty silent rooms. A store-sign swayed back and forth, creaking cheerfully. A breath of music floated up the street. A man's laugh rocketed up, full-throated and joyous.

A woman stepped out onto the boardwalk with a swirl of spangled skirts. She was slender in cream-and-gold; her face was as pale and her hair as golden as her garments. "Ken!" she called. "Here!"

A man appeared under the distant arcade. He was lithe and slim, poised like a fighter. "Lorna! We're alive—and they're gone!"

Her laughter rippled down to him. "Of course! Isn't it wonderful?"

He came towards her with long strides. "Where's Murray? And Louise?"

"Here!"

"Here!"

A stocky man came out into view, red-cheeked and grinning; then a woman in a glimmering ice-blue gown. They came together in the middle of the long street, the men clasping hands and slapping shoulders, the women embracing.

"Alive—and the invaders gone!"

"Clean away—back to Arcturus!"

"Forgot us!"

"We're alive!"

In the violet glow their faces were exultant, eyes bright, teeth flashing. The woman called Louise swung her dark hair, and her feet began to move to the music. "It's too wonderful—I can't stand still—I have to dance!"

She seized Murray's hands and drew him protesting into a breathless polka, around and around to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the music, while the other two laughed until they cried. "Oh, Murray—if you could see yourself!"

"Never," panted the stocky man, mopping his face with a bandanna, "never in my life did I dance like that."

The others were silent a moment; the music had fallen into silence and the slow wind came lonely down the street. "But come on!" said Murray. "This is a night to celebrate—we've got places to go and things to do, my friends!"

Fire fountained from the church spire, red sparks floating on the wind. Every cornice was a worm of blue light. Roman candles soared with a whispering rush overhead. Rockets went up, to burst into silent stars dripping and fading down the sky. "To the watchtower!" cried Lorna.

"By the way of the wineshop!" shouted Murray. And their laughter echoed across the quiet town.

"I was the greatest scientist in the world," said Murray, looking out over the roofs.

"And I was the greatest singer," said Lorna.

"And I was the best boxer."

"And I the most expensive whore."

"Now, we four . . ." said Murray, and a silence fell upon them. The desert was empty and dark, all around the town.

"To us!" cried Louise, raising her wineglass.

"To us!" and they drank, standing high above the rooftops, while the dark wind ruffled their hair.

"Why should it be we four?" whispered Lorna to Ken. "It seems so—"

"We're old friends," he said. "Who else would it be? Can you imagine the world without old Murray—or Lou?"

She touched his hair. "I always loved you—really."

"I know you did. I know that now, Lorna. And it's all right. I mean really all right, now, because we're alive, you hear—You stars, there, do you hear? We're alive!"

The echoes fluttered away across the silent roofs and died at the edge of the desert.

"Four out of billions," said Murray, coming nearer, "because I know we are the last."

"It's better not to talk about it," said Louise, following him.

"But we all saw the invaders' ships floating across the sky, burning and burning . . . rank after rank of them, as if they had nothing to do but float there, and burn. There couldn't be anyone else alive."

"Well, then," said Louise with a bright glint of her eye, "four is enough, isn't it?"

"My dear—" said Murray, turning to her.

"Let's dance, then—let's sing!" cried Lorna. The music was skirling, and the lights pulsed up over the tower like phantom combers breaking.

Loudly their laughter rang out

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

across the wasteland, and untiring their bodies whirled about the floor. They drank the red wine in great draughts, and were not drunken; they sang, and never paused for breath. The night flowed away across the mountains; the first edge of dawn appeared in the east.

The music had stopped, and only the distant crickets were singing in the darkness. "I'm cold," said Lorna, "it's too cold here. Let's go down."

"Four out of billions," muttered Murray as they descended the tower. "How could they have come to miss us? I can't remember—why were we here, the four of us?"

"We drove," said Ken.

"Yes, at night," said Louise. "With the invaders up over the horizon—I remember. We came out across the desert, and then . . ." Her voice trailed away.

"I can't remember any more," said Lorna.

"No. Only a dream, a darkness, until we woke up."

"But we're alive—what does it matter? We're alive. . . ."

"Suppose they had all died," Murray muttered. "All, the whole planet recently dead."

"Don't talk about it."

"No, but think of the dead people lying in their thousands and millions, all night long—would they dream?"

"Don't talk about it."

"No, but would they dream? With no live people to interfere, to blot them out—such a refreshing thing, only the dead. Dreaming, in thousands, their one last night."

Lorna shuddered. "A nightmare."

"Yes." Murray nodded vehemently. "A terrible thing—it's good that we're not there, that the desert protects us. All those dead people, dreaming freely at last, but so many at once! One dream overlapping the next, fragments tearing fragments apart! A terrible last night, for the dead people in their billions."

They were silent, imagining the fretful voices, out beyond the mountains. *I was the greatest . . . . I could have conquered the . . . men worshipped my beauty . . . I, I was the king of . . . no, listen to me, to me!*

They shuddered. Lorna said, "Why are we going this way?"

Ahead, in the town square, a car was overturned beside the old iron war monument. The hood was crumpled, the windshield smashed and scattered; there was a body lying, half in and half out.

"I saw it from the tower," Murray said dismally.

"Let's not go any nearer."

"But we have to, don't you understand? The night's almost over."

The purple witchfires were dying, all down the street. The light in the east was rising.

"One of us?" whispered Ken.

They drew closer together, huddling in the cold dawn.

"But which one?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

They looked at each other. Lorna saw that Ken was turning misty, half transparent; a morning star burned through his breast. Seeing her stare, he crouched and said fiercely, "I'm real—me, I'm real!" And he struck his chest with his fist, but it made no sound.

"I'm dreaming you all," said Lorna disbelievingly. "I'm pretending. That must be me—my car, I was trying to get away, I crossed the desert and smashed up." But her voice was thin, and the morning light blazed through her as if she were made of paper.

"All dead? All dead?" said Murray's plaintive voice. He was gray as smoke, like all the rest. They drifted toward the monument.

They came together around the body that sprawled out of the wreck. "I was the greatest scientist in the world," said Murray's voice, fading.

"I was the greatest boxer," echoed Ken's, and he was gone.

"I was the most expensive whore —" A faint voice, dying on the wind.

"I was the greatest singer—" A murmur, rustling away into unbroken silence.

The four were gone. Only the one sprawled figure remained—a slight young man, dead, with blood on his jacket, and his weak face twisted up at the stars. A last thought, fading: *And I—I was nothing at all.*

STUDENTS! TEACHERS!

start
a
Science Fiction Club

Have interesting meetings, stimulating conversation in your school. Meet people who read Science-Fiction. For information on how to start a club write to:

Science Thru Science-Fiction
Box No. 9148
Chicago 90, Illinois

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It's been a long time between Besters, so say we all. His last two, Fondly Fahrenheit *and the memorable* 5,271,009 *(F&SF, August and March, respectively, 1954) dealt, as so many Besters have, with the odd and queer, if not downright peculiar, problems of crime. Once more the master picks up his brush to paint the absolutely unexpected: a crime that mulishly refuses to allow itself to be committed, a time-travel paradox that (crowning Besterian paradox!) blithely contains no paradox, and a mad professor who gets saner and saner as the story gets madder and madder. It's been* such *a long time between Besters!*

THE MEN WHO MURDERED MOHAMMED

by ALFRED BESTER

THERE WAS A MAN WHO MUTILATED history. He toppled empires and uprooted dynasties. Because of him, Mount Vernon should not be a national shrine, and Columbus, Ohio should be called Cabot, Ohio. Because of him the name of Marie Curie should be cursed in France, and no one should swear by the beard of the Prophet. Actually, these realities did not happen, because he was a mad professor; or, to put it another way, he only succeeded in making them unreal for himself.

Now the patient reader is too familiar with the conventional mad professor, undersized and over-browed, creating monsters in his laboratory which invariably turn on their maker and menace his lovely daughter. This story isn't about that sort of make-believe man. It's about Henry Hassel, a genuine mad professor in a class with such better known men as Ludwig Boltzmann (See "Ideal Gas Law"), Jacques Charles, and Andre Marie Ampere (1775-1836).

Everyone ought to know that the electrical ampere was so named in honor of Ampere. Ludwig Boltzmann was a distin-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

guished Austrian physicist, as famous for his research on black-body radiation as Ideal Gases. You can look him up in Volume 3 of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, BALT to BRAI. Jacques Alexandre Cesar Charles was the first mathematician to become interested in flight, and he invented the hydrogen balloon. These were real men.

They were also real mad professors. Ampere, for example, was on his way to an important meeting of scientists in Paris. In his taxi he got a brilliant idea (of an electrical nature, I assume) and whipped out a pencil and jotted the equation on the wall of the honsom cab. Roughly, it was: $dH = ipdl/r^2$ in which p is the perpendicular distance from P to the line of the element dl; or $dH = i \sin \phi \, dl/r^2$. This is sometimes known as Laplace's Law, although he wasn't at the meeting.

Anyway, the cab arrived at the Academie. Ampere jumped out, paid the driver, and rushed into the meeting to tell everybody about his idea. Then he realized he didn't have the note on him, remembered where he'd left it, and had to chase through the streets of Paris after the taxi to recover his runaway equation. Sometimes I imagine that's how Fermat lost his famous "Last Theorem," although Fermat wasn't at the meeting either, having died some two hundred years earlier.

Or take Boltzmann. Giving a course in Advanced Ideal Gases, he peppered his lectures with involved calculus which he worked out quickly and casually in his head. He had that kind of head. His students had so much trouble trying to puzzle out the math by ear that they couldn't keep up with the lectures, and they begged Boltzmann to work out his equations on the blackboard.

Boltzmann apologized and promised to be more helpful in the future. At the next lecture he began: "Gentlemen, combining Boyle's Law with the Law of Charles, we arrive at the equation $pv = p_o v_o (1 + at)$. Now obviously if ${}_aS^b = f(x)dx\varnothing(a)$, then $pv = RT$ and ${}_vS\, f(x,y,z)\, dV = O$. It's as simple as two plus two equals four." At this point Boltzmann rememered his promise. He turned to the blackboard, conscientiously chalked $2 + 2 = 4$, and then breezed on, casually doing the complicated calculus in his head.

Jacques Charles, the brilliant mathematician who discovered Charles' Law (sometimes known as Gay-Lussac's Law) which Boltzmann mentioned in his lecture, had a lunatic passion to become a famous paleographer—that is, a discoverer of ancient manuscripts. I think that being forced to share credit with Gay-Lussac may have unhinged him.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He paid a transparent swindler named Vrain-Lucas 200,000 francs for holograph letters purportedly written by Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, and Pontius Pilate. Charles, a man who could see through any gas, ideal or not, actually believed in these forgeries despite the fact that the maladroit Vrain-Lucas had written them in modern French on modern notepaper bearing modern watermarks. Charles even tried to donate them to the Louvre.

Now these men weren't idiots. They were geniuses who paid a high price for their genius because the rest of their thinking was other-world. A genius is someone who travels to truth by an unexpected path. Unfortunately, unexpected paths lead to disaster in everyday life. This is what happened to Henry Hassel, professor of Applied Compulsion at Unknown University in the year 1980.

Nobody knows where Unknown University is or what they teach there. It has a faculty of some two hundred eccentrics, and a student body of two thousand misfits . . . the kind that remain anonymous until they win Nobel prizes or become The First Man On Mars. You can always spot a graduate of U.U. when you ask people where they went to school. If you get an evasive reply like: "State," or "Oh, a freshwater school you never heard of," you can bet they went to Unknown. Some day I hope to tell you more about this university which is a center of learning only in the Pickwickian sense.

Anyway, Henry Hassel started home from his office in the Psychotic Psenter early one afternoon, strolling through the Physical Culture arcade. It is not true that he did this to leer at the nude coeds practicing Arcane Eurythmics; rather, Hassel liked to admire the trophies displayed in the arcade in memory of great Unknown teams which had won the sort of championships that Unknown teams win . . . in sports like Strabismus, Occlusion and Botulism. (Hassel had been Frambesia singles champion three years running.) He arrived home uplifted, and burst gaily into the house to discover his wife in the arms of a man.

There she was, a lovely woman of thirty-five, with smoky red hair and almond eyes, being heartily embraced by a person whose pockets were stuffed with pamphlets, micro-chemical apparatus and a patella reflex hammer . . . a typical campus character of U.U., in fact. The embrace was so concentrated that neither of the offending parties noticed Henry Hassel glaring at them from the hallway.

Now remember Ampere and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Charles and Boltzmann. Hassel weighed one hundred and ninety pounds. He was muscular and uninhibited. It would have been child's play for him to have dismembered his wife and her lover, and thus simply and directly achieve the goal he desired—the end of his wife's life. But Henry Hassel was in the genius class; his mind just didn't operate that way.

Hassel breathed hard, turned and lumbered into his private laboratory like a freight engine. He opened a drawer labelled DUODENUM and removed a .45 caliber revolver. He opened other drawers, more interestingly labelled, and assembled apparatus. In exactly seven and one-half minutes (such was his rage) he put together a time machine (such was his genius).

Professor Hassel assembled the time machine around him, set a dial for 1902, picked up the revolver and pressed a button. The machine made a noise like defective plumbing and Hassel disappeared. He reappeared in Philadelphia on June 3rd, 1902, went directly to No. 1218 Walnut Street, a red brick house with marble steps, and rang the bell. A man who might have passed for the third Smith Brother opened the door and looked at Henry Hassel.

"Mr. Jessup?" Hassel asked in a suffocated voice.

"Yes?"

"You are Mr. Jessup?"

"I am."

"You will have a son, Edgar? Edgar Allan Jessup . . . so named because of your regrettable admiration for Poe?"

The third Smith Brother was startled. "Not that I know of," he said. "I'm not married yet."

"You will be," Hassel said angrily. "I have the misfortune to be married to your son's daughter, Greta. Excuse me." He raised the revolver and shot his wife's grandfather-to-be.

"She will have ceased to exist," Hassel muttered, blowing smoke out of the revolver. "I'll be a bachelor. I may even be married to somebody else. . . . Good God! Who?"

Hassel waited impatiently for the automatic recall of the time machine to snatch him back to his own laboratory. He rushed into his living room. There was his red-headed wife, still in the arms of a man.

Hassel was thunderstruck.

"So that's it," he growled. "A family tradition of faithlessness. Well, we'll see about that. We have ways and means." He permitted himself a hollow laugh, returned to his laboratory, and sent himself back to the year 1901, where he shot and killed Emma Hotchkiss, his wife's maternal grandmother-to-be. He returned to his own home in his own time.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There was his redheaded wife, still in the arms of another man.

"But I *know* the old bitch was her grandmother," Hassel muttered. "You couldn't miss the resemblance. What the hell's gone wrong?"

Hassel was confused and dismayed, but not without resources. He went to his study, had difficulty picking up the phone, but finally managed to dial the Malpractice Laboratory. His finger kept oozing out of the dial holes.

"Sam?" he said. "This is Henry."

"Who?"

"Henry."

"You'll have to speak up."

"Henry Hassel!"

"Oh, good afternoon, Henry."

"Tell me all about time."

"Time? Hmmm . . ." The Simplex And Multiplex Computor cleared its throat while it waited for the data circuits to link up. "Ahem. Time. (1) Absolute. (2) Relative. (3) Recurrent. (1) Absolute: period, contingent, duration, diurnity, perpetuity—"

"Sorry, Sam. Wrong request. Go back. I want time, reference to succession of, travel in."

Sam shifted gears and began again. Hassel listened intently. He nodded. He grunted. "Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Right. I see. Thought so. A continuum, eh? Acts performed in past must alter future. Then I'm on the right track. But act must be significant, eh? Mass-action effect. Trivia cannot divert existing phenomena streams. Hmmm. But how trivial is a grandmother?"

"What are you trying to do, Henry?"

"Kill my wife," Hassel snapped. He hung up. He returned to his laboratory. He considered, still in a jealous rage.

"Got to do something significant," he muttered. "Wipe Greta out. Wipe it all out. All right, by God! I'll show 'em."

Hassel went back to the year 1775, visited a Virginia farm and shot a young colonel in the brisket. The colonel's name was George Washington, and Hassel made sure he was dead. He returned to his own time and his own home. There was his redheaded wife, still in the arms of another.

"Damn!" said Hassel. He was running out of ammunition. He opened a fresh box of cartridges, went back in time and massacred Christopher Columbus, Napoleon, Mohammed, and half a dozen other celebrities. "That ought to do it, by God!" said Hassel.

He returned to his own time, and found his wife as before.

His knees turned to water; his feet seemed to melt into the floor. He went back to his laboratory, walking through nightmare quicksands.

"What the hell is significant?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hassel asked himself painfully. "How much does it take to change futurity? By God, I'll really change it this time. I'll go for broke."

He traveled to Paris at the turn of the 20th century and visited a Madame Curie in an attic workshop near the Sorbonne. "Madame," he said in his execrable French, "I am a stranger to you of the utmost, but a scientist entire. Knowing of your experiments with radium— Oh? You haven't got to radium yet? No matter. I am here to teach you all of nuclear fission."

He taught her. He had the satisfaction of seeing Paris go up in a mushroom of smoke before the automatic recall brought him home. "That'll teach women to be faithless," he growled. . . . "Guhhh!" The last was wrenched from his lips when he saw his redheaded wife still— But no need to belabor the obvious.

Hassel swam through fogs to his study and sat down to think. While he's thinking I'd better warn you that this is not a conventional time story. If you imagine for a moment that Henry is going to discover that the man fondling his wife is himself, you're mistaken. The viper is not Henry Hassel, his son, a relation, or even Ludwig Boltzmann (1844-1906). Hassel does not make a circle in time, ending where the story begins, to the satisfaction of nobody and the fury of everybody . . . for the simple reason that time isn't circular, or linear, or tandem, discoid, syzygous, longinquitous, or pandiculated. Time is a private matter, as Hassel discovered.

"Maybe I slipped up somehow," Hassel muttered. "I'd better find out." He fought with the telephone, which seemed to weigh a hundred tons, and at last managed to get through to the library.

"Hello, library? This is Henry."

"Who?"

"Henry Hassel."

"Speak up, please."

"HENRY HASSEL!"

"Oh. Good afternoon, Henry."

"What have you got on George Washington?"

Library clucked while her scanners sorted through her catalogues. "George Washington, first president of the United States, was born in—"

"First president? Wasn't he murdered in 1775?"

"Really, Henry. That's an absurd question. Everybody knows that George Wash—"

"Doesn't anybody know he was shot?"

"By whom?"

"Me."

"When?"

"In 1775."

"How did you manage to do that?"

"I've got a revolver."

"No, I mean, how did you do

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it two hundred years ago?"

"I've got a time machine."

"Well, there's no record here," Library said. "He's still doing fine in my files. You must have mssed."

"I did not miss. What about Christopher Columbus? Any record of his death in 1489?"

"But he discovered the New World in 1492."

"He did not. He was murdered in 1489."

"How?"

"With a .45 slug in the gizzard."

"You again, Henry?"

"Yes."

"There's no record here," Library insisted. "You must be one lousy shot."

"I will not lose my temper," Hassel said in a trembling voice.

"Why not, Henry?"

"Because it's lost already," he shouted. "All right! What about Marie Curie? Did she or did she not discover the fission bomb which destroyed Paris at the turn of the century?"

"She did not. Enrico Fermi—"

"She did."

"She didn't."

"I personally taught her. Me. Henry Hassel."

"Everybody says you're a wonderful theoretician, but a lousy teacher, Henry. You—"

"Go to hell, you old biddy. This has got to be explained."

"Why?"

"I forget. There was something on my mind, but it doesn't matter, now. What would you suggest?"

"You really have a time machine?"

"Of course I've got a time machine."

"Then go back and check."

Hassel returned to the year 1775, visited Mount Vernon, and interrupted the spring planting. "Excuse me, Colonel," he began.

The big man looked at him curiously. "You talk funny, stranger," he said. "Where are you from?"

"Oh, a freshwater school you never heard of."

"You look funny, too. Kind of misty, so to speak."

"Tell me, Colonel, what do you hear from Christopher Columbus?"

"Not much," Colonel Washington answered. "Been dead two-three hundred years.

"When did he die?"

"Year Fifteen Hundred someodd, near as I remember."

"He did not. He died in 1489."

"Got your dates wrong, friend. He discovered America in 1492."

"Cabot discovered America. Sebastian Cabot."

"Nope. Cabot came a mite later."

"I have infallible proof!" Hassel began, but broke off as a stocky and rather stout man with a face ludicrously reddened by rage, approached. He was wearing baggy

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

grey slacks and a tweed jacket two sizes too small for him. He was carrying a .45 revolver. It was only after he had stared for a moment that Henry Hassel realized that he was looking at himself and not relishing the sight.

"My God!" Hassel murmured, "it's me, coming back to murder Washington that first time. If I'd made this second trip an hour later, I'd have found Washington dead. Hey!" he called. "Not yet. Hold off a minute. I've got to straighten something out, first."

Hassel paid no attention to himself; indeed, he did not appear to be aware of himself. He marched straight up to Colonel Washington and shot him in the gizzard. Colonel Washington collapsed, emphatically dead. The first murderer inspected the body, and then, ignoring Hassel's attempt to stop him and engage him in dispute, turned and marched off, muttering venomously to himself.

"He didn't hear me," Hassel wondered. "He didn't even feel me. And why don't I remember myself trying to stop me the first time I shot the colonel? What the hell is going on?"

Considerably disturbed, Henry Hassel visited Chicago and dropped into the Chicago University squash courts in the early 1940s. There, in a slippery mess of graphite bricks and graphite dust that coated him, he located an Italian scientist named Fermi.

"Repeating Marie Curie's work, I see, *Dottore*?" Hassel said.

Fermi glanced about as though he had heard a faint sound.

"Repeating Marie Curie's work, *Dottore*?" Hassel roared.

Fermi looked at him strangely. "Where you from, *amico*?"

"State."

"State Department?"

"Just State. It's true, isn't it, *Dottore*, that Marie Curie discovered nuclear fission back in nineteen ought-ought?"

"No! No! No!" Fermi cried. "We are the first, and we are not there yet. Police! Police! Spy!"

"This time I'll go on record," Hassel growled. He pulled out his trusty .45, emptied it into Doctor Fermi's chest, and awaited arrest and immolation in newspaper files. To his amazement, Dr. Fermi did not collapse. Dr. Fermi merely explored his chest tenderly and, to the men who answered his cry, said: "It is nothing. I felt in my within a sudden sensation of burn which may be a neuralgia of the cardiac nerve, but is most likely gas."

Hassel was too agitated to wait for the automatic recall of the time machine. Instead he returned at once to Unknown University under his own power. This should have given him a clue, but he was too possessed to notice. It was at this time that I (1913-1975) first saw him . . . a dim figure tramping through parked cars, closed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

doors and brick walls, with the light of lunatic determination on his face.

He oozed into the library, prepared for an exhaustive discussion, but could not make himself felt or heard by the catalogues. He went to the Malpractice Laboratory where Sam, the Simplex And Multiplex Computor, has installations sensitive up to 10,700 angstroms. Sam could not see Henry, but managed to hear him through a sort of wave-interference phenomenon.

"Sam," Hassel said, "I've made one hell of a discovery."

"You're always making discoveries, Henry," Sam complained. "Your data allocation is filled. Do I have to start another tape for you?"

"But I need advice. Who's the leading authority on time, reference to succession of, travel in?"

"That would be Israel Lennox, spatial mechanics, professor of, Yale."

"How do I get in touch with him?"

"You don't, Henry. He's dead. Died in '75."

"What authority have you got on time, travel in, living?"

"Wiley Murphy."

"Murphy? From our own Trauma Department? That's a break. Where is he now?"

"As a matter of fact, Henry, he went over to your house to ask you something."

Hassel went home without walking, searched through his laboratory and study without finding anyone, and at last floated into the living room where his redheaded wife was still in the arms of another man. (All this, you understand, had taken place within the space of a few moments after the construction of the time machine . . . such is the nature of time and time travel.) Hassel cleared his throat once or twice and tried to tap his wife on the shoulder. His fingers went through her.

"Excuse me, darling," he said. "Has Wiley Murphy been in to see me?"

Then he looked closer and saw that the man embracing his wife was Murphy himself.

"Murphy!" Hassel exclaimed. "The very man I'm looking for. I've had the most extraordinary experience." Hassel at once launched into a lucid description of his extraordinary experience which went something like this: "Murphy, $u - v = (u^{½} - v^{¼})(u^{a} + u^{x}v^{y} + v^{b})$ but when George Washington $F(x)y^{2}Ødx$ and Enrico Fermi $F(u^{½})dxdt$ one-half of Marie Curie, then what about Christopher Columbus times the square root of minus one?"

Murphy ignored Hassel, as did Mrs. Hassel. I jotted down Hassel's equations on the hood of a passing taxi.

"Do listen to me, Murphy,"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hassel said. "Greta, dear, would you mind leaving us for a moment? I— For heaven's sake, will you two stop that nonsense? This is serious."

Hassel tried to separate the couple. He could no more touch them than make them hear him. His face turned red again and he became quite choleric as he beat at Mrs. Hassel and Murphy. It was like beating an Ideal Gas. I thought it best to interfere.

"Hassel!"

"Who's that?"

"Come outside a moment. I want to talk to you."

He shot through the wall. "Where are you?"

"Over here."

"You're sort of dim."

"So are you."

"Who are you?"

"My name's Lennox. Israel Lennox."

"Israel Lennox, spatial mechanics, professor of, Yale?"

"The same."

"But you died in '75."

"I disappeared in '75."

"What d'you mean?"

"I invented a time machine."

"By God! So did I," Hassel said. "This afternoon. The idea came to me in a flash . . . I don't know why . . . and I've had the most extraordinary experience. Lennox, time is not a continuum."

"No?"

"It's a series of discrete particles . . . like pearls on a string."

"Yes?"

"Each pearl is a 'Now.' Each 'Now' has its own past and future. But none of them relate to any others. You see? If $a = a_i + a_2ji + \varnothing ax(b_1)$—"

"Never mind the mathematics, Henry."

"It's a form of quantum transfer of energy. Time is emitted in discrete corpuscles or quanta. We can visit each individual quantum and make changes within it, but no change in any one corpuscle affects any other corpuscle. Right?"

"Wrong," I said sorrowfully.

"What d'you mean, 'wrong?'" he said, angrily gesturing through the cleavage of a passing co-ed. "You take the trochoid equations and—"

"Wrong," I repeated firmly. "Will you listen to me, Henry?"

"Oh, go ahead," he said.

"Have you noticed that you've become rather insubstantial? Dim? Spectral? Space and time no longer affect you."

"Yes?"

"Henry, I had the misfortune to construct a time machine back in '75."

"So you said. Listen, what about power input? I figure I'm using about 7.3 kilowatts per—"

"Never mind the power input, Henry. On my first trip into the past, I visited the Pleistocene. I was eager to photograph the mastodon, the giant ground sloth, and the saber-tooth tiger. While

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I was backing up to get a mastodon fully in the field of view at f/6.3 at 1/100th of a second, or on the LVS scale—"

"Never mind the LVS scale," he said.

"While I was backing up, I inadvertently trampled and killed a small Pleistocene insect."

"Ah-ha!" said Hassel.

"I was terrified by the incident. I had visions of returning to my world to find it completely changed as a result of this single death. Imagine my surprise when I returned to my world to find that nothing had changed."

"Oh-ho!" said Hassel.

"I became curious. I went back to the Pleistocene and killed the mastodon. Nothing was changed in 1975. I returned to the Pleistocene and slaughtered the wild life . . . still with no effect. I ranged through time, killing and destroying, in an attempt to alter the present."

"Then you did it just like me," Hassel exclaimed. "Odd we didn't run into each other."

"Not odd at all."

"I got Columbus."

"I got Marco Polo."

"I got Napoleon."

"I thought Einstein was more important."

"Mohammed didn't change things much—I expected more from *him*."

"I know. I got him, too."

"What do you mean, you got him too?" Hassel demanded.

"I killed him September 16th, 599. Old Style."

"Why I got Mohammed January 5th, 598."

"I believe you."

"But how could you have killed him after I killed him?"

"We both killed him."

"That's impossible."

"My boy," I said, "time is entirely subjective. It's a private matter . . . a personal experience. There is no such thing as objective time, just as there is no such thing as objective love, or an objective soul."

"Do you mean to say that time travel is impossible? But we've done it."

"To be sure, and many others, for all I know. But we each travel into our own past, and no other person's. There is no universal continuum, Henry. There are only billions of individuals, each with his own continuum; and one continuum cannot affect the other. We're like millions of strands of sphagetti in the same pot. No time traveller can ever meet another time traveller in the past or future. Each of us must travel up and down his own strand alone."

"But we're meeting each other now."

"We're no longer time-travellers, Henry. We've become the spaghetti sauce."

"Spaghetti sauce?"

"Yes. You and I can visit any

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

strand we like, because we've destroyed ourselves."

"I don't understand."

"When a man changes the past he only affects his own past . . . no one else's. The past is like memory. When you erase a man's memory, you wipe him out, but you don't wipe out anybody else. You and I have erased our past. The individual worlds of the others go on, but we have ceased to exist." He paused significantly.

"What d'you mean . . . 'ceased to exist'?"

"With each act of destruction we dissolved a little. Now we're all gone. We've committed chronicide. We're ghosts. I hope Mrs. Hassel will be very happy with Mr. Murphy. . . . Now let's go over to the Academie. Ampere is telling a great story about Ludwig Boltzmann."

Coming next month...

The November issue of F&SF might well be described as: All Star, Part II. Many of the stories in it were originally planned for this special October number, but was squeezed out at the last moment because of space problems and other prosaic considerations. You'll be reading Poul Anderson's novelet of a near future time, with the action taking place in the millions-of-years-ago past—a biting analysis of very real, very current social problems that is laced with such strong drink as maddened, stampeding tyrannosaurs fought by squadrons of circling jeeps! The title, for the benefit of jostling anthologists, is *Wildcat*. Also for the books are poignant, memorable pieces by Carol Emshwiller and Avram Davidson, as well as a convincing (if surprising) finale to the entire series of "John" stories, by Manly Wade Wellman —plus a number of other choice items. An issue filled with excitement and pure reading pleasure!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"ELLERY, THEY'VE GOT A GOOD CASE"

"On what evidence, dad?"

"Why, son, you take Jack London and Hemingway and C. S. Forester and six-seven other great adventure writers, put 'em together in an adventure magazine, and they add up to some really great writing and reading."

"My conclusion exactly. They're the kind of top stories usually published only in anthologies and other book collections. But now Davis Publications—who publish our monthly, ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE—is making them available to lovers of adventure stories in a handy magazine... the new JACK LONDON'S ADVENTURE MAGAZINE."

"Same size magazine as yours, Ellery, isn't it?"

"Identical. Same pocket-size, same number of pages, and same price... 35 cents."

"Y'know, son, you two will make a mighty handsome pair on the newsstands: ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE and JACK LONDON'S ADVENTURE MAGAZINE side by side!"

THE WORLD'S GREATEST ADVENTURE STORIES by the World's Greatest Adventure Writers!

This exciting new magazine will appeal to all lovers of classic adventure writing. The **JACK LONDON'S ADVENTURE MAGAZINE** will present a diversified collection of hallowed names each issue. Brand-new or half-forgotten tales by such greats as Ernest Hemingway, James M. Cain, C. S. Forester, J. C. Furnas, Borden Deal, Alexander Pushkin and of course Jack London himself will be yours to savor.

FIRST ISSUE NOW ON SALE. Pick up your copy now at your newsstand, or, to insure not missing a single issue of this unique magazine, enter your subscription now.

6 Issues $2.00
12 Issues $4.00

JACK LONDON'S ADVENTURE MAGAZINE MF-10
527 Madison Avenue, Room 520
New York 22, New York

Please send me _____ issues of JACK LONDON'S ADVENTURE MAGAZINE. I enclose $_____.

☐ Cash Enclosed ☐ Please Bill Me

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ Zone_____ State_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

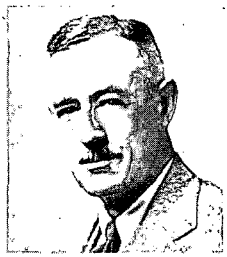
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Science Fiction Marches On . . .

The rising popularity of science fiction among the cultural leaders of the nation, as well as among the people at large, is ample testimony of its vitality and maturity. Engineers, physicians, chemists, statesmen, educators – they have all found pleasure and enlightenment in science fiction.

Now, Dr. Gilbert Highet, the distinguished classical scholar, critic, and judge of the Book-of-the-Month Club, reviewing his tenure as literary critic for *Harper's Magazine,* makes special point of *"the steady improvement in science fiction, or rather fantasy-fiction . . . ,"* and labels it as *"one of the most interesting general trends"* that he has observed recently.

And J. Donald Adams, former editor of the *New York Times Book Review,* author and editor of its celebrated page 2, "Speaking of Books," has given science fiction the accolade of the highest standards of literary criticism. He says:



"I am . . . convinced that science fiction, in spite of the vast amount of silly and clumsy writing the genre has spawned, is deserving of the serious attention it is only now beginning to receive. . . . It is at once a literature of escape and one deeply and earnestly concerned with mankind's present plight and its problematical future."

THE MAGAZINE OF
Fantasy and
Science Fiction

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED